A

Help to Holy Walking,

OR, A

GUIDE

TO

GLORY.

CONTAINING

Directions how to Worship God, and to Walk with him in the whole Course of our LIVES.

Gen. 5. 24. *And* Enoch *Walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.*

Gen. 6. 9. Noah *was a Just Man, and Perfect in his Generation; &* Noah *Walked with God.*

John 4. 23, 24. *The Hour cometh, and now is, when the True Worshippers shall Worship the Father in Spirit, and in Truth; for the Father seeketh such to Worship him: God is a Spirit, and those that Worship him must Worship him in Spirit and Truth.*

By *EDWARD BURY*, Late Minister of *Great Bolas*, in *Shropshire*.

LONDON,
Printed by *F. L.* for *Nevil Simmons*, at the *Princes Arms*, in St. *Paul's Church-Yard*. 1675.

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TO

The Right Worſhipful, truly Noble, and really Religious Lady, the Lady Wilbraham, *of* Woodhey, *in the County of* Cheſter, *the Pattern of Piety, the Honour of her Family, Sex, and Countrey*; E. B. *wiſheth all Happineſs External, Internal, and Eternal.*

Madam,

SEeing Cuſtom ſeems to plead preſcription, and moſt Writers, Religious or Prophane, make bold to prefix ſome Great Name before their Writings, the better to Commend them to the World: I having theſe Papers by me, deſigned for the Preſs, and not being willing to break Cuſtom, and having as much need of Protection as any, was not long in determining, but quickly made choice of your Ladyſhip, partly emboldned thereto, by your thankful Acceptance of a former Tract. My Ends in this Dedication is not to Intereſt you in any of my Errors, or Miſtakes; if any ſuch be found, let them be charged upon me; and I aſſure you, when they

are Diſcovered, I ſhall be ready to throw the firſt ſtone at them; and were I Conſcious of any ſuch, I ſhould be loath to prefix yours, or my own Name before it: Neither is it that I think you need it, for I know not of any thing herein contained that you are Ignorant of; however it may not be un-uſeful to mind you of the things you know, *Phil.* 3. 1. 2 *Pet.* 1. 12. Neither is it to tell the World how much I am ingaged to you, and to the Worthy branches of your Family; for though I own your Courteſies thankfully, yet I know they were not beſtowed to this End, that others ſhould take Notice of them. But it is to let the World know, how High an Eſteem I have of you, and that I think you are fitter to Judge of Writings of this Nature than many others, it being but a real Hiſtory of your own daily Practice. And alſo that I may point out unto the World (who are better led by Example, than by Rule) a Pattern for their Imitation, for in you they may ſee theſe Directions reduced into Practice, which otherwiſe they may think impracticable: And alſo that the World may be convinc'd (who in this looſer Age is apt to think the contrary) that Gentility, and true Piety may Lodge together in the ſame Breaſt; and that our Age, as well as the Apoſtles, 2 *John* 1. 13. doth afford ſome Elect Ladies, and that they may not think that Gentility and Debauchery are *termius convertabiles*; and he that owns one, muſt own the other alſo: but that there are

ſome

some (and alas! too few) Noble, and Generous Spirits, that the Temptations of the Devil, nor the Allurements of the World, neither Riches, Honours, nor Pleasures, can draw, or drive away from Christ. And, Madam, though those that know you, take Notice of many Excellent Qualifications in you; as Humility, Self-denial, Prudence, Temperance, Charity, *&c.* Yet real Holiness, true Piety, and the power of Godliness, is the most fragrant Flower in your Garland, and the most Orient Jem that doth Adorn you; without which the rest would not be so resplendant; for by Sincerity Virtues are Adopted Graces. The World, I know, is as always it hath been, not only out of their way, but also out of their Wits in matters of Salvation, and stark blind in Spirituals, and only dote upon gilded Vanitie, and Worship a Golden Calf; yet the time is coming, their minds will change when they shall see all their Glory, how high soever it flye, vanish like Smoak before their Eyes into nothing. Now, they take them all to be Fools, or Mad men, that run Counter to the Courses of the World, and the Corruptions of the Times; and most men had rather be Honourable, than Religious; Great, than Good. But when they have cast up their Accounts at Death, they will find there was a mistake in the Reckoning: They will then see Holiness was the best Fashion, though left worn; and that all the Pomp of the World was but gilded Rottenness, a dead

Carkaſs ſtuff'd with Flower; and that at Death all the Gold in the *Indies* ſignifies no more than a handful of Dirt or Dung. The Time is at Hand (and long it cannot be) that one Dram of Grace will be worth a World; and one glymps of God's Favour worth a Thouſand Crowns and Kingdoms. Humility and Self-denial are two Soul-adorning Graces, though ſeldom ſeen worn in the Breaſt of great Perſons; they are the firſt Leſſon Taught in the School of Chriſt, though few ever take them out; they are Beautiful in Great men, as well as Poor: And ſubmiſſive Devotion in Religious Duties doth not wrong Majeſty it ſelf. Virtue is better than a Thouſand Eſcutchions; and 'tis true Nobility where God is the top of the Kin, and Religion lyes at the bottom. 'Tis a greater Honour to be a Child of God, than to be Born of Princes; and to be Eſpouſed to Chriſt, ſpeaks more of Honour, and Happineſs, than the World can conferr. Riches of themſelves make not the Souls better or worſe; neither doth God think ever the better of men for Wealths ſake, except they take Chriſts Counſel, and make Friends with this Unrighteous *Mammon*, and by this means have their Riches made up into a Crown for their Head in the World to come. If theſe things ſeem Queſtionable to any, a little time may reſolve the doubt, when it will plainly appear, that a bare profeſſion of Religion will ſerve no mans turn for Salvation, *Mat.* 7. 22. & 25. 1, 2, *&c.* The Lamp of Profeſſion

Profession may Light a man to Death, never to Heaven. Madam, I Write not these things for your Instruction, but I had need to speak them out, that others may hear. My Prayers to God are that you may go on in Honouring him, who hath Honoured you. And improve all for his Glory, from whom you have received all; knowing you cannot do too much, or suffer too much for him, who hath done so much, and suffered so much for you; you cannot buy this Gold too dear, the World you may buy too dear, and most men do with the loss of their Souls.

Madam, as to this unpolished Piece, though I am conscious to my self of many wants, yet I hope a Will to do good is not wanting: He that did receive a Turtle for a Sacrifice, when a Lamb was wanting, and a little Goats Hair, when no Butter was to be had; and commended the Widdows mite, when she had no more, I hope will receive this when he knows I have no better; where but little is given, of him less will be required. The Subject I know is necessary, if not spoiled in the handling; though the Ring look dusk, yet the Diamond will sparkle. Multiplicity of contrary Studies, and other Imployments, as most that know me can Witness, might, perhaps, have pleaded my Excuse for Writing, (as indeed it did satisfie me for several Years) so I hope it will plead my Excuse for coming forth in so homely a dress. When *Paul* beheld the Idolatry of the *Athenians*, his Spirit was moved;

and when I beheld the formality of Professors, no wonder, if, with *Crassus* dumb Son, I spake, when I saw my Father wronged. Among all the Objection I could think of that might come in against this my well-meant Labour, I found none that said it was impossible it should do good, I am sure none can justly Object it was not intended for good; those that really desire to lead a Holy life, I hope will own it; as for others, those that have neither good word for God, nor for his ways, I cannot expect they should have any for me; however, my witness against them will be upon Record. Madam, if you have better at hand, you may bestow this upon some wanting Soul, for whose sake it was Written. I have not further to add, but desire of God in these declining Times, when Atheism, Prophaness, Superstition, and Debauchery are too much in Fashion, that he will keep you and yours from the Temptations laid in your way; that you may shine as Stars of the first Magnitude to enlighten this dark Hemisphere, that you may grow in Grace, as you grow in Years, and may be presented blameless at the Coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; that your Interest in Christ, and Title to Glory, may be cleared up, that when you come to dye, you may have nothing to do but to dye, and resign up your Soul into the Hands of Christ; these are the desires, and shall be the Prayers of him who is, *Madam, Yours to his Power to Serve you,* Edw. Bury.

Eaton, *Nov.* 2. 1674.

THE

THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

CHriſtian Reader, I think my ſelf obliged to give thee ſome Account of this following Treatiſe; for in the beginning of it thou wilt find mention made of a former Treatiſe, which indeed is not yet Publiſhed; containing the Doctrine of Holy Walking. Now, although this was firſt deſigned, and firſt begun, and in Order of Nature ſhould have been the Firſt born; yet it fared with it as it did with Zarah, *Gen.* 38. 28. *This* Pharez *hath made a breach, and came out firſt; and, like* Jacob, *ſupplanted his Brother, and got the Birth-right; yet haply the other may not be ſtrangled in the Birth; if this prove not too Chargable in the keeping: Know then, when I firſt ſet upon the Work, I intended it to be Divided into five Parts, all in the ſame Method; the firſt containing, 1. An Introduction to the whole. 2. The Explication what Holy Walking implyes.*

implies. 3. *The Reasons why 'tis necessary.* 4. *The Objections against it Answered.* 5. *Reproof to several sorts that Live otherwise.* 6. *Some Considerations put to them.* 7. *Some gross mistakes about Holiness.* 8. *Marks of Holy Walking.* 9. *Devices of Satan to keep Men in sin.* 10. *The Priviledges of the Godly.* 11. *Qualifications requisite to an Holy Life.* 12. *Moving Considerations thereunto.* 13. *Hinderances in the way to Heaven. And Lastly, Helps and Directions. The Second Part is the present Book here presented, of which I need give you no other Account. The Third contains Directions,* 1. *For the Thoughts.* 2. *For the Words.* 3. *For the Actions.* 4. *For the Affections.* 5. *For the Consciences.* 6. *For Recreations.* 7. *For Apparel.* 8. *For Eating and Drinking.* 9. *For Redeeming Time.* 10. *For Buying and Selling.* 11. *For Company.* 12. *For Solitarineſs.* 13. *To bear Affliction well.* 14. *In a particular Calling. The Fourth contains a dissuasive,* 1. *From Sin in general.* 2. *From Pride.* 3. *Atheism.* 4. *Covetousness.* 5. *Drunkenness.* 6. *Adultery.* 7. *Swearing.* 8. *Lying.* 9. *Murder.* 10. *Idleness.* 11. *Apostacy.* 12. *Idolatry.* 13. *Hypocrisie.* 14. *Stealing.* 15. *Contention. The* 5. *and last contains Relative Duties,* 1. *Of the unmarried in reference to Marriage.* 2. *The mutual Duties of the Husband, and Wife.* 3. *The Husbands peculiar Duties.* 4. *The Wives Duties.* 5. *Parents Duties.* 6. *The Duties of Children.* 7. *Of Masters.* 8. *Of Servants.* 9. *Of Magistrates.* 10. *Of Subjects.* 11. *Of*

11. *Of Miniſters.* 12. *Of People. Now, only the ſecond of theſe ſees the Light; the firſt and laſt are well near Finiſhed, and may ere long ſhew themſelves, and the reſt in time, if my Life and Health be Continued, and I be not in the mean time convinc'd that they will be uſeleſs: I know the World is full of Books, & many that complain moſt, read leaſt; but ſhould we obſerve moſt mens Devotion and their Carriage in the World, we may Imagine, that Books, that reduce Chriſtianity into practice, and teach us our Duties to God and Man, are yet wanting, that is not ſufficiently taught, that is not ſufficiently learnt; there are need of more Books that maintain the Vitals of Religion, in an Age, when almoſt all Religigion is turned into a matter of Formality, and Ceremony, and little of the power of Godlineſs appears. I have not in this, neither do I intend in the other, brought you any new Lights, but to direct you in the good Old way, mentioned,* Jer. 6. 16. *which the Saints in former Ages have Walk'd in, and which will be proved to be the only way to Heaven, though of late there are many new attempts to find a better; but if any, but the way of Holineſs end in Happineſs, let me be called a falſe Prophet. Mens Brains were never better ſtufft, nor their Tongues ever more buſie, but their Hearts are empty, and their Hands are idle; never more talking of the way, and never leſs walking in it: And if good words would ſave, without good Hearts, or good Works, or good Duties, never ſo many would go to Heaven as in our Age. Moſt mens knowledge floats in the Brain, and*

little

little sinks, or soaks down into the Heart, or seasons the Life, or Conversation; hence, like Children that have the Rickets, by reason of some Obstructions, the Head grows too big for the Body. If a bare Profession of Religion would serve turn for Salvation, (but it will not, Mat. 7. 22. & 25. 1, 2, 3, &c. to the 14.) *many would be saved, for they can Number their Prayers as the Papist doth his Beads; but God doth not accept them by Number, but by Weight;* He is a Spirit, and will be Worshipped in Spirit, and in Truth. *A little Grace (I fear a little Profession) makes a great shew in a Great man; the power of Godliness is for the most part left to the Poor, that are more willing to take pains, and have little to lose. But whether God will be satisfied with this, that those to whom he hath given most, should do least, is a Question should be thought of. A bare Profession makes many a man have a high Conceit of himself, but the Law allows not a man to be Judge in his own Cause. My Design in the following Tract, is not to make the way to Heaven narrower, nor the Gate straiter than it is; but to put you up some* Way-marks, *that you mistake not the Road. 'Tis not to make the Burden heavier than needs must; but to shew you what Burden 'tis that Christ would have you take up. 'Tis not to quench the smoaking Flax, or to break the bruised Reed, but to awaken the dull and drowsie Formalist, and to set him on fire that was quite out, and to shew the mistakes of those that think the way to Heaven to be so broad, that a whole Parish may go abreast, and a reeling Drunkard*

Drunkard can hardly ſtep aſide; and the Gate ſo wide, that a Man may enter, not only with the World, but with a load of Sins alſo on his back; and that they may uſe their Prayers, as others do their Charms, with good Succeſs, though they underſtand them not; but God is not much taken with a little Lip labour, when the Heart is abſent, Prov. 19. 26. Ezek. 33. 32. *The Time is coming Men will be convinc'd to purpoſe, that their Soul was their chiefeſt Jewel; that Heaven was no Fable, and Hell no Scare-Crow, nor Eternity no Melancholy Fancy; and that God ſpake in Earneſt what they took in Jeſt: That Sin is no matter of Sport, and the Service of God no Formal Complement: That thoſe were the Wiſeſt that made Proviſion for Eternity, and thoſe the verieſt Fools that fooled away their Salvation, and Sold their Souls, as* Eſau *his Birthright, for a Meſs of Pottage, or for that which was worſe, for a baſe Luſt, and laid out their money for that which is not Bread, and their Labour for that which profits not*, Iſa. 55. 2. *But the Time will come they will Repent the bargain. But to return, it may be Objected, this plain Diſcourſe is not ſuitable for this Learned Age, but the Sick Man deſires to have* Medicum non Eloquentem ſed Saventem, *and rather deſires to be Cured, than Courted. Thoſe that Sin in* Engliſh, *why ſhould they be reproved in* Latine, *but in plain words. Had I had better at Hand thou hadſt had it, and how it came to paſs I had no better, I can give thee this brief Account. When by Providence I was laid aſide as a broken*

Veſſel,

Veſſel, and the Time was come that the Levites *were ſent every one to his Field,* Nehem. 13. 10. *and I not having that Proviſion made as many others had, and but little, if any thing left to maintain a numerous Family, I was forced to Fight againſt Poverty, almoſt to the neglect of my Study; ſo that I can ſay, with the Apoſtle,* Acts 20. 34. *(and many that knows me, may ſay as much for me)* Theſe Hands miniſtred to my Neceſſity and thoſe that were with me: *My Head being filled with other diſtracting Studies, and my Hands with other Imployments, that I had few ſpare hours (except by Night) to mind thoſe Studies, ſo that I brought forth this, as a* Bear *doth her Whelps, a confuſed Lump, and had no time to lick it into Form. 'Tis a Baſket of unripe Fruits, blown down by the Wind of Worldly Diſtractions; yet miſtake not, had my time been more, and my Abilities greater, it ſhould have ſpoken plain* Engliſh: *I would not have hid any Fruit with Leaves, nor been a* Barbarian *to the meaneſt Reader, nor have wrapt up my meaning in a Cloud. Reader, my Advice is, if thou findeſt Chriſt here, though not in ſoft Rayment, but as in his Infancy but meanly clad, yet reject him not; good Counſel in plain* Engliſh *is not to be rejected; and a good Stomack will not reject good Meat, though not Modiſhly dreſt. If there be any thing here Offered, contrary to God's Word reject it, and ſo ſhall I when I know it; if not, rejecting of it will be a diſſowning God himſelf. If thou meet with (as I fear thou maiſt) ſome Tautologies, or Repetitions, look*

upon

upon it as the Fruit of broken Studies, and interrupted Meditations. I have ſaid enough, and, perhaps, too much, and ſhall add no more, but wiſh that God, who hath inclined my Heart to Write it, may incline thine to Read and Practice it; and if thou haſt any benefit by it, I ſhall think my pains well beſtowed: This is the unfeigned deſire of him, who is

Chriſt's, and the Churches
Servant, and a well-willer
to thy Souls Health,

EDWARD BURY.

Eaton, *Nov.* 2.
1674.

A Help to holy Walking OR A GUIDE to GLORY.

CHAP. I.

Motives to holy Duties.

Having in a former Treatiſe handled the Doctrine of holy walking, and ſhewed the excellency and neceſſity of it, and given you Marks and Motives to perſwade you to it, and Directions in it, and anſwered the Objections that are made againſt it; I ſhall come now to treat of it in particular, and ſhew you how to demean your ſelves towards God, in the ſeveral parts of his Worſhip, wherein conſiſts the main, though not the whole of holy walking: And in every part of Gods worſhip, I ſhall give you Directions for the right performance. But Reader, wilt thou reſolve to follow thoſe Directions? For otherwiſe 'tis in vain for me to write, or thee to read, it will but make thee ſin with a Candle in thy hand, What good will

Meat do if not eaten and digested? Or Physick do if not taken? Or a Plaister if not applyed? So what good will Directions do, if not followed? It is not enough to read thy duty, but thou must do it, nay 'tis not enough to do it, but thou must do it well: Those that worship God, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth, 'tis not a little lip labour, or knee service will serve his turn without the Heart, and the Heart rightly qualified, he regards it not, he will have none of it, for *there is none holy as the Lord*, 1 Sam, 22. And the Lord admits of none into his service that are not holy, *Lev.* 10. 3. *I will be sanctifyed by those that draw near to me, Lev.* 20. 7. *Be ye holy, for I am holy*, He is a living God, and requires living Sacrifice, and will not take up with a dead heart: There must be a principle of life in thee, or thou art not fit to come into his presence, for he is a consuming fire unto his Enemies, there must be Regeneration, or there can be no Salvation, *John* 3. 5. And *without faith 'tis impossible to please him.* Heb. 11 6. 'tis not enough to worship him, but it must be in sincerity and truth, *Josh.* 24. 14 What is thy Resolution, wilt thou worship him or wilt thou not? there are few in plain words will deny it, but in actions they do, either they worship him not at all, or give him that he requires not, or do it in a manner he regards not: They are like the Son that said to his Father, *I go Sir, but went not*, Mat. 21. 30. But shall we take it for granted that thou wilt worship him? but wilt thou do it in truth and sincerity? otherwise God will not regard it. I fear we may say of many, as *Joshua* of *Israel Josh.* 24. 19. *You cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God*, but is it your Resolution as theirs was in the verses following

lowing, *Nay, but we will serve the Lord,* and that you will choose the Lord to serve him, consider what you do, you must take him to be your God, and be willing to have your Souls cleansed from all your sins, and must be willing to take the Lord Jesus Christ as he is offered in the Gospel, to be your Lord and Husband, and be as willing to be ruled by him, as saved by him, and must resolve to obey his Laws, and do his will, and live in the performance of those spiritual duties he requires at at thy hand. Yea, thou must have a setled Resolution to cleave to Christ, and obey him even in the most despised, disgraceful, dangerous, difficult and costly part of duty: Though it be to the loss of thy worldly enjoyments, yea, and life it self: I know many would pick of choose their duties, this they would do, but that they would not; they scum of the Fat and sweet of duty, but leave that which is difficult, or dangerous, but God will have no such Servants: obey him thou must, though thy Father, Mother, and all thy Friends become thine Enemies upon the account; yea, in some cases thou must not only leave, but hate Father and Mother, *&c.* yea, thy own life for his sake, yea, though thou loose thy credit and esteem in the World, and be made a scorn and a reproach for his sake; though thou loose thy pleasure, and never see merry day whilst thou livest; though it endanger thy Estate, and bring thee to Poverty; though thou loose thy Liberty, and be cast into a Prison; yea, though thou loose thy life, and be brought to a Stake to suffer; yea, though thou seest few or none walk that same way with thee: *Noah* must obey God, though the whole World disobey him; yea, thou must obey him, though his commands be never

so contrary to thy carnal interest, or never so opposite to flesh and blood, and though they are never so hard or difficult, or dangerous, or costly, before ever thou take upon thee the profession of Religion, sit down first and reckon the charges, lest like many thou begin to build, and be unable to finish it; and not like many, put their hands to the Plow, and then look back: or like the stony ground when persecution ariseth, presently are offended: resolve to give him thy heart with thy hand, or he will have none of thee, he knows the heart, and trie the reins, and thou canst not deceive him with a dissembling shew, when *Nadab* and *Abihu* offered strange fire, he slew them. When *Ananias* and *Saphira* played the Hypocrite, he struck them dead. Cleanse thy heart therefore if thou wilt serve him, and serve him thou must, or do worse: Thou canst never err on that hand, in serving him too well; he deserves more and better than thou canst give him, his wages will be beyond thy work: now that I may prevail with thee to serve God, take these following Motives.

1. *Motive*, We should worship and serve the Lord our God, because he hath commanded us so to do, and his command makes it our duty; we are his Creatures, and we owe our selves, and all that we have to him for our Creation. He made us, and therefore hath most right to us; He made us for his service, and therefore 'tis all the reason in the World that we should serve him; for who is the Pot, but the Potters? and this is the service he requires of us, to worship him according to his will, and praise him for his benefits, this is all he requires at our hands, even this Tribute of praise, and shall we be so ingrateful to our great Benefactour

factour, to deny him this? Nay, we are his also by right of Redemption, for we had sold our selves unto slavery, even to Sathan, and were become Bond-slaves to this hellish *Pharaoh*; who exercised more cruelty to our Souls, than ever *Pharaoh* did to the Bodies of the *Israelites*; and in the slavery had remained for ever, had not God sent his own Son to ransome us with the loss of his life, and the shedding of his pretious blood: *Satan* was the strong man armed that kept his house in peace, till Christ a stronger than he disarmed him, and took away his weapons wherein he boasted. And now *being bought with a price, we should glorifie God with our Bodies, and with our Souls which are Gods.* The end he aimed at in our Redemption, was his own glory as well as our liberty; and this he expects from our hands, is, *we being delivered from the fear of our Enemies, might serve him without fear, in Holiness and Righteousness before him all the days of our Lives*, Luk. 2.74,75. Nay, we are also his by Covenant, under our Hand and Seal in our Baptisme, we were dedicated to his service, which Covenant since we have often ratified at the Sacrament of the Supper, and how can we deny our own act and deed? *He is our Lord, and we should worship him*, Psal. 45. 11. Now that worship and service is required of us is evident, Scripture and Reason speaks as much, 2 *Kings* 17.36. *You shall not fear other Gods, nor bow your selves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them, but the Lord who brought you out of the Land of* Egypt *with great power, and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him you shall do sacrifice, and his statutes, and his ordinances ye shall observe.* Exod. 34. 4. *You*

ſhall worſhip no other God but him, the like we have, Exod. 20. 50. 1 Chron. 16. 29. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his Name, bring an Offering and an Oblation before him, worſhip him in the beauty of holineſs.* Yea, Chriſt himſelf preacheth this doctrine, when the Divil tempted him to fall down and worſhip him; he anſwered, *It is written thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve,* Mat. 4. 8. Yea, he directs us with what worſhip to worſhip him, *John* 4. 23, 24. *The true worſhippers worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth, God is a Spirit, and thoſe that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in Spirit;* and of this ſpiritual worſhip we may alſo read, *Phil.* 3. 3. Or will you hear the counſel of an Angel from Heaven, you have it, *Rev.* 19. 10. *Worſhip God,* yea, this is the practice of the Angels, the work they do, and the work that the Angels, and gloryfied Saints ſhall do through all Eternity, *Heb.* 1. 6. But what are Teſtimonies in ſo plain a caſe? few deny it, though few practice it as they ought, we might bring you examples from the beginning of the World to this day, of the godly in all Ages that have thus worſhipped, thus ſerved God, though many in all Ages, the more is the pity, have given that to the Divel, which is due to God alone; many have ſacrificed to Devils, *and worſhiped and ſerved the Creature more than the Creator bleſſed for ever,* Rom. 1. 25. To prove that 'tis ſo, now, I need not inſtance in the *Indians,* that know no better, nor in the Papiſts that worſhip ſtocks and ſtones, and the works of their own hands, which is forbidden, *Exod.* 20. 5. 6. *Iſa.* 2. 8. And ſwear by God and our Lady, as the *Iſraelites did by God and Malchon,* and

ſome

some other Mediators with Christ, but how many may we find serve the Devil, the World, and the Flesh; though they covenanted to fight against them in their Baptism: if the Devil bid them sweare, they will swear, if he bid them be drunk, they will be drunk; or if he bid them lye, or steal, or decieve, they will obey; let God say what he will to the contrary: Yea, though he set them upon the hardest, difficultest, dangerous work they will do it, though they venture life and limb in his service; but let them at the end brag of their wages, that so love the work, but as with *Paul*, *Acts* 24. 14. *In the way which men call Heresie, so worship the God of your Fathers.*

2. *Motive*, Thou shouldest serve God, for he is the best Masters; yea, there is no other that deserves thy best service but him: The tongue of Men, nor Angels cannot express the excellency that is in God, our Cockle shells cannot comprehend this Ocean; what qualifications canst thou desire in a Master? that are not to be found in God as the abstract? for all the excellency that is to be found among the Creatures, is but as a drop of this Ocean, a ray of this Sun, and a spark of this fire. Wouldst thou have one that is able to defend thee, and see that thou art not wronged? Here is Omnipotency it self, if he set thee on work he can bear thee out. The Devil may shake his chain, and wicked Men may gnash their teeth at thee, hurt thee they cannot, all the powers of darkness can do thee no wrong. The Devil could not touch one of *Jobs* cattel without a Commission sealed in Heaven; and if thou faithfully serve him, he will never grant any Commission, but what shall be for thy good, *Rom.* 8. 28. He is *El Shaddai*,

dai, a God able to destroy, or remove all rubs out of his way: But no other Master can defend thee against him. Or wouldst thou have a merciful, loving, or tender hearted Master? the World cannot afford thee such another; never was there indulgent Father, or tender hearted Mother, more careful over their only child, than God is over all his servants, *Isa.* 49. 15. *Can a Woman forget her sucking child, that she shall not have compassion on the Son of her Womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee saith the Lord. Behold I have engraven thee upon the palms of my hand thy walls are continually before me.* Never was Goldsmith more careful of his gold, that it shall not be in the Furnace longer than need is, than God is of his People, they shall be no longer in the Furnace of affliction, then necessity requires, till their dross is consumed, and they refined: Or wouldst thou serve a wise Master? One able to direct thee and instruct thee in thy work? One able to counsel thee what to do, and what to forbear? Here is one that is Wisdom it self, yea the Fountain of Wisdom. *The foolishness of God saith the Apostle is wiser than the wisdom of Man.* 1 *Cor.* 1. 25. That is that which in the eyes of the World is foolishness, he can over wit, and over work all his Enemies, and thou canst not be in such a strait, but he can help thee, nor in so much danger but he can deliver thee, as he did *Israel* at the Red Sea; *Daniel* in the Lions Den, the three Children out of the fiery Furnace, *Jonah* out of the Whales belly, and *Peter* out of Prison. Or wouldst thou serve a Master that is faithful and just, that will make good his word, and fulfil his promise? God is such a one, he is more faithful than the Sun and Moon

Moon in their courſes, *Hath he ſaid it, and ſhall he not do it, hath he ſpoken it, and ſhall he not bring it to paſs?* Heaven and Earth ſhall fail, before one tittle of his word ſhall fail, till all be fulfilled, The experience of five Thouſand years cannot produce one example when God hath falſified his word. Or wouldſt thou ſerve ſome honorable Perſon, God hath the higheſt titles of honor, he is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and the Ruler of Princes, he is the Lord of Heaven and Earth, the Caſtles of a thouſand hills are his, yea, all the Beaſts of the Forreſts, all Nations to him are but as a drop of a Bucket, or the ſmall duſt of the Ballance. Never fear then, he is able to pay thee thy wages. *David* delighted more in being his ſervant, than in being King of *Iſrael*, never any loſt by his ſervice; wouldſt thou ſerve one that is loving and kind? why he is love it ſelf, ſee one act of his love, *John* 3. 16. *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believed in him ſhould not dye, but have everlaſting life.* See the love of the Father in giving, and the love of the Son in dying; and wouldſt thou ſerve a patient Maſter? He is infinite in Patience, if thy heart be right, he will bear with much: Now what Maſter in the World wilt thou compare to him? if none, why wilt not ſerve him, and yet alas, moſt men ſerve the Devil his ſworn Enemy: one of theſe two thou muſt, thou doſt ſerve, for theſe are the two grand Commanders, and the one or the other all Men obey. The Devil is thy ſworn Enemy, and ſeeks thy Soul to deſtroy it, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. He offers much indeed, but cannot pay thee, he hath nothing of his own, but his vitious qualities; what he ſhews thee is but what

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he baits his hook with, or with the Fowler his snares, not to feed thee, but to entrap thee; he hunts for thy Soul like a blood hound, and nothing will serve him but thy dishonor. The World also will deceive thee, and promise pleasure, and pay pain, it will never pay thee thy wages, and wilt forsake such a Master as God is, and commit thy self to such known cheats? Heaven and Earth may stand amazed at thy folly: well, remember thy wages they will give thee.

3. *Motive,* As he is the best Master, so he sets his servants about the best work, when the Devil sets his about the basest drugery: A wise servant before he is hired, would know his work, that he may demand answerable wages: Now the work which God sets his servants upon is reasonable, and easie, and pleasant, and delightful, 'tis the works of Piety and Charity that he requires, to love God above all, and our Neighbours as our selves: These are the two great commands, and upon these *hang all the Law and the Prophets*, Mat. 22. 37. &c. *Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* Rom. 13. 10. And is not this a pleasant and delightful duty, and is it not reasonable that we should love God our great Benefactor, in whom we live, and move, and have our being; and our Brethren that are of the same flesh and blood: To believe in him also is our duty, and is it not reasonable when we can never prove that ever he deceived any. To praise him also is our work, this is an Angelical work, fit for Heaven, and Heaven-born Souls, and will be the work of Eternity, where Saints and Angels shall make up one quire, to Trumpet out the prayses of God: To hold communion with him, this is a Christians happiness here, and to converse with

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him in Glory is Heaven it ſelf. 'Tis no wonder then that the Service of God is called perfect Freedom, and his Servants are called his Free-men, 1 *Cor.* 7. 21. 'Tis no wonder that Chriſt tells us, *his Yoak is eaſie, and his Burthen is light*, Mat. 11. 30. for all thoſe that feel it find it ſo, through Divine Aſſiſtance. I know, to a Carnal Heart, and unſanctified Soul it appears otherwiſe; but 'tis the Galls, Sores, and Putrified Corruption of Nature that makes it ſo; the eaſieſt Yoak upon a galled Neck ſeems uneaſie; Learn but this one Leſſon, get but this one Qualification, to love God above all, and all the reſt will prove eaſie; Love makes Labour light: the Love of Chriſt conſtrained the Apoſtle *Paul*, and made him willing, not only to be bound, but to dye for Chriſt; then Prayer would be no difficult Duty, for who would not willingly go to him he Loves, and pour out his requeſts into his Boſom? when he knows he ſhall have a ſupply, and hath ſuch promiſes as thoſe; *ask, and you ſhall have; ſeek, and you ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened to you*, Pſal. 50. 15. Praiſe alſo then will be a delightful Duty; how apt are we to Commend thoſe we Love, and ſpeak well of them? Hence it is, that the Saints and Angels in Heaven are not weary of this work, even to Eternity; Communion with God is no toylful, but delightful Duty, for Union, and Communion with God is the Souls Happineſs; nay, 'tis here a Heaven upon Earth, and will be their Heaven for ever, which is ſweet here, though much interrupted; what will it be then when we enjoy him Face to Face, and ſee him as he is? here it fills the Heart full of ſuch Joy, *as no Stranger ſhall ever meddle with*, Prov. 14. 10. I know the world brags

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of their pleaſures in the Devils Service, and are afraid to be Chriſtians for fear of loſing them, but this is but one of the Devils Lime-twigs, in which he fetters them, and one of the deceits of the Father of Lyes: a true Chriſtian finds by Experience more true Joy, more raviſhing delight in one days Communion with Chriſt, than ever he did in the Service of ſin; for, *in the midſt of laughter the ſinners heart is ſorrowful, and the end of that mirth is Heavineſs.* But a Believer may *eat his Meat with Joy, and drink his Wine with a merry Heart, for God accepteth his Work*, Eccl. 9. 7. *And with joy they can draw waters out of theſe Wells of Salvation*, Iſa. 12. 3. *Yea, ſhout for joy if he be of an upright Heart*, Pſal. 32. 11. There is none in the world that has more true Cauſe of Joy than they have; here they are under the Divine Protection of God, and are ſure to want nothing that is good; and when this Earthly Tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved, they have a Kingdom prepared for them. But what is the Devils work which he imploys his Servants about? 'Tis the baſeſt drudgery, the moſt ſervile Slavery, the moſt ſordid, unreaſonable, Dangerous work in the world; he ſets them to hate God, who is the chiefeſt good, to hold up weapons of defiance againſt him, from whom they have their Life and Breath, and Being; to Blaſpheme his Name, abuſe his Creatures, break his Commandments, Perſecute his Children, both by Hand and Tongue; pluck the Stars out of his Right Hand, the Signet of his Finger, the Apple of his Eye, his Jewels, thoſe whom his Soul Loveth; yea, to de-throne him, and ſet up the Devil in his place; yea, he makes them ſo mad upon it, that they will venture Life and Limb in the Proſecution;

cution; yea, Liberty and Eſtate, and Ruine their own Souls, and as many more as they are able; and will not be perſwaded by Miniſters, Parents, or their Godly Friends, from ſuch Courſes; when the Devil enters into theſe Swine, they run headlong till they Ruine themſelves.

4. *Motive.* Thou ſhouldſt ſerve the Lord, becauſe he beſt deſerves thy Service; he hath done more for thee than all the World beſides, and that which all the World cannot do. It was he that Created thee, and gave thee a Being when thou waſt nothing. It was not long ſince there was nothing heard of thee, and God had no need of thee; he was Infinite in his Perfection, and Glory before thou waſt, and thou haſt added nothing to his Happineſs, and wilt not own him for thy Creator? Yea, he hath made thee a Rational Creature, when he might have made thee a bruit Beaſt; he made thee capable of Communion with himſelf, yea, in his own Image, when he might have made thee a Dog, or Toad, or Serpent, or the moſt deſpicable Worm that crawls under thy Feet: what Excellent Faculties hath he beſtowed upon thee? As Underſtanding, Will, Affections, Memory, Conſcience, and ſuch like. Yea, he hath made thee *Little lower than the Angels*, Pſal. 8. 4, 5. Thou waſt the Clay, and he was the Potter; he might have made thee a Veſſel of diſhonour, *and ſhall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, why haſt thou made me thus*? Not only ſo, but he hath given thee thy Limbs, and thy Senſes, when thou mighteſt have been Blind or Lame, or Deaf or Dumb; and is not this a Mercy, thou haſt the uſe of Reaſon, when others run raging in the ſtreet, Mad, Frantick, or Lunatick? Yea, 'tis he that maintains

tains thee at his own Coſt and Charges; 'tis his Corn, and his Wine that feeds thee; his Wool, and his Flax that Cloaths thee; 'tis his Silver, and his Gold that inriches thee; all is his, and all is his free-gift; thou deſerveſt not the Crumbs that fall under thy Table; and is all this nothing? *Hoſ.* 2. 5. &c. Yea, hadſt thou theſe things of thy own, they could do thee no good, without his Bleſſing; Food could not nouriſh, nor Cloaths keep thee warm; he gives thee Peace, when thou mighteſt have been in bloody War; Health, when thou migheſt have been on thy ſick Bed; and Plenty, when thou migheſt have been in pinching want; and is all this nothing? Why now doth he do this for thee, but that thou mighteſt Serve him? Haſt thou now a better Friend, or greater Benefactor to beſtow thy Service upon? Can the Devil, or the World, or thy Friends, or thy Wealth do thus for thee? I know they cannot; why then are they preferred before him? Nay, this is not all; when thou hadſt Revolted from God, and ſold thy ſelf a Slave to Satan; when thou waſt in thy Bloud, and no Eye pityed thee; when thou couldſt not help thy ſelf, and waſt unworthy to be helpt; he ſent his own Son to Redeem thee out of thy Slavery, to ſuffer what was due for thy ſins, even the pains of Hell, and the curſed Death upon the Croſs, and that when thou waſt his Enemy, and all to free thee from the guilt and filth of ſin, and from the puniſhment due for ſin, from the Curſe of the Law, the wrath of God, the Slavery of Satan, and from everlaſting damnation; and is all this nothing? Yea, all this was done that thou mighteſt *Serve him in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all the days of thy Life*, Luke 1. 75. Nay, further,

further, he bestows upon thee many helps and furtherances; he gives thee his Word, his Ordinance, his Sacraments, his Ministers, the motions of his Spirit, the checks of thine own Conscience, and the Example of his People; Promises, Threatnings, Mercies, Judgments, and all to this End; and yet doth he not deserve thee? Hath the Devil or the World done more for thee than he hath? Why then wilt thou serve them? Did they Create thee, or art thou theirs by right of Redemption? Do they preserve, or maintain thee? Do they Feed, or Cloath thee? Or pay thee Wages? No, no, all thy Friends in the World, nor all the Angels in Heaven could not satisfie for our sin; did they Love thee better than he that laid down his Life for thee? Or, will they make better Provision for thee than God will? Or pay thee better Wages? Then Serve them and spare not; but deceive not thy self, they cannot do it; what canst want if thou be God's Servant? He is every way furnished to help thee; art thou ten thousand Talents indebted, and canst not pay a farthing? Christ will be thy Surety, and discharge thy debt; hast thou Scarlet-sins lying upon thy Conscience? Here is Blood to wash them away, 'tis he, and he alone that can forgive sins. Here is the Bread of Life to feed thee, and the Water of Life to refresh thee, the Spiritual Manna, fit Food for thy Soul; the true Nectar and Ambrosia: he that eats of this, shall never Hunger; and he that drinks of this, shall never Thirst. *Here is Rich Robes to Cloath thee, and Eye salve to make thee see; and Gold tryed in the Fire, to make thee Rich,* Rev. 3. 17, 18. Here are Graces as Jewels to adorn thee, the Wedding-Garment to make thee a welcom Guest;

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he is, *Mecor Majim Chajim, A Fountain of Living Water*, Jer. 2. 13. *Tzur gnolanim, a Rock of Ages*, Isa. 26. 4. All the water of Consolation is in this Sea, all the Light is in this Sun, and all Comfort in this God; Canst find such another Master that hath done, and will do for thee, as he hath, and will do? the Devil and the World will deceive thee, if they promise to do it.

5. *Motive.* Thou shouldst serve God, for as he hath the best work, so he gives the best Wages, and Servants usually seek for such Masters; something he gives in hand, as earnest of the Bargain, and incouragement in the work; and reserves most to the Years end, when he will plenteously recompence all thy pains, and remove all cause of repining; in hand he gives his Servants his Spirit, this is the mark he knows them by, *those that have not the Spirit of God are none of his*, Rom. 8. 9. This is called, *the Spirit of Adoption*, Rom. 8. 15. *Ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry*, Abba Father; *'tis called the earnest of the Spirit in our Hearts*; this is called *the Comforter*, John 15. 27. and 'tis given to instruct us, and to lead us into all Truth, *John* 18. 13. And doubtless those cannot want Comfort that have such a Comforter, they cannot lose their way, that have such a Guide; he it is that dictates their Prayers for them, for they know not what to ask; yea, God for the Comfort and Consolation of his Servants here in the World, gives them an Interest in the Promises Recorded in the Word of God, which are more worth than the World; the greatest King on Earth cannot make and perform such Promises to his greatest Favourite, they are well called *great and precious Promises*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. For great

great things are promiſed in them that believe, that apprehends an intereſt in them, may live upon his faith, and his hope in the abſence of all Creature enjoyments; theſe are his Fathers Legacy: 'tis true, Believers have but little in hand, yet much in a Promiſe; but little in Poſſeſſion, yet much in Reverſion; they have Heaven and Earth in a Promiſe; here they have a Promiſe they ſhall not lack, but at Death they ſhall receive their Inheritance; yea, *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither is entred into the heart of Man, to conceive what God hath provided for thoſe that love him*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. Here they have a Promiſe, and God hath put his hand to it; they ſhall not want protection, nor proviſion, God hath promiſed *he will never leave them nor forſake them*, Heb. 13. 5. And if God be for us, who can be againſt us, yea, that *they ſhall want nothing that is good*, Pſal. 34. 9. *The young Lions lack and ſuffer hunger, but thoſe that fear the Lord ſhall want no good thing.* Pſal. 84. 11. *The Lord is a Sun and a Shield, he giveth Grace and Glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them that live uprightly*: If we have ſincere hearts, if wealth be good for us, we ſhall have it; and if poverty be good, why ſhould we not be content? ſomtimes Phyſick is as neceſſary as food. They have a Promiſe of Deliverance out of Trouble; *Many are the Troubles of the Righteous, but the Lord delivers them out of all*, Pſal. 34. 19. and 50. 15. Take one place for all; *Rom.* 8. 28. *All things ſhall work together for good to thoſe that love God.* What matter then is it what our ſufferings are, when we are ſure we ſhall get by them? God that brought Light out of Darkneſs, and Order out of Confuſion, can work Good to us out of Evil,

there is no Condition a ſervant of God can be in, but in the Scripture he may find Comfort, or Company, or both; yea, God beſtows his graces upon his ſervants, which are better than the moſt Orient Pearls, or coſtly Jewels; theſe they are adorned with, and no other did ever wear them: they have the rich Robes of Chriſts Righteouſneſs, the Garments of Holyneſs, this is Gods Livery, and all his ſervants wear it; yea, he adopts them, and makes them not only his ſervants, but his children, 1 *John* 12. 2 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. *I will be a Father to you, and you ſhall be my Sons and Daugoters, ſaith the Lord Almighty*, he makes them not only Sons, but Heirs, *Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Chriſt*, Rom. 8. 17. Gives them the *wedding Garment*, Mat. 22. 12. Yea, marries them to his Son, *Cant.* 6. 3. Thus we ſee there is good wages if there were no more, but they have much more in Reverſion, a Kingdom, a Kingdom of glory, *they ſhall enter into their Maſters joy*, Mat. 25. 24. Yea, into a Kingdom prepared for them, from the foundation of the World; yea, into life eternal, *Mat.* 25. 34. 46. See now if thou canſt meet with a Maſter that gives better wages, the Devil indeed promiſeth much, but performeth little; all this ſaith he will I give thee, when he can give juſt nothing: but ſuppoſe he had the World at his diſpoſe, what good would it do thee? it cannot give content, and make thee happy. Indeed there was one dream't of happineſs in a proſperous Eſtate, but when he wak't it was but a Dream, *Luk.* 12. 16. *&c.* Content grows not in the Worlds Garden, theſe outward things bear no proportion to an immortal Soul; they are of too baſe a birth and breeding to give it content, but if it could ſatisfie

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at preſent, what wilt thou do at Death? then they muſt down to the Chambers of Death, to Hell it ſelf, there to remain for ever and ever; this is the Devils wages which he will certainly give all thoſe that ſerve him.

6. *Motive*, To ſerve God in the ſincerity of our Hearts, is the only way to true happineſs; and to ſerve any other Maſter but him, or to ſerve him Superſtitiouſly, or Hypocritically, is the certain way to Ruine and Deſtruction; all thoſe that have ſerved God in ſincerity, not one of them have miſcarried; and of all other, there is not one that ever attained Heaven and Happineſs; the way of Holineſs is the only Road to true Happineſs; and how can the end be attained, if the means be not uſed? 'tis Godlineſs that hath the Promiſe of this Life and that to come; Happineſs is that which all men ſeek, but few men find, becauſe few ſought it in a way of Holyneſs.

The Covetuous man thinks if he could get Riches, he ſhould attain Happineſs; and this makes him Moil and Toil, and Cark and Care; yea, make himſelf miſerable, that he may be happy; and yet never attains ſo much as content: and wounds his Conſcience to get an Eſtate, and is but like a Sumpter Horſe that goes loaden all the day with as much Treaſure as he can carry, and at night ſtript of all, and turned into a dirty ſtable, with his gall'd back; ſo after Death they ſhall be turned into Hell with their gall'd Conſciences.

The Voluptuous man that placeth his happineſs in pleaſure, thinks if he can but obtain his deſire, he ſhall be happy; but how little ſatisfaction can he find here? all his pleaſure ends in a ſnuff, and the

end of his Mirth is Sadneſs; and all this while he deprives himſelf of true pleaſure.

The Ambitious man thinks to aſcend the ſteps of Honor, is to attain Happineſs; when alas this is the emptieſt of all Bubbles, and how oft do we ſee men break their necks from the top of Promotion?

Theſe men build the Fabrick of their Hopes and Happineſs upon a Sandy foundation; where one daſhing ſhower, or ſtormy tempeſt throws down their Babel: but a Chriſtian laies a ſure foundation in Holyneſs, and in the fear and ſervice of God; they build upon the Rock which never fails them, they ſeek Happineſs in Gods way, *Pſal.* 128. 1. *Bleſſed is every one that ſerveth the Lord, and walketh in his way*; not every one that is Rich or Honorable, this is the Worlds language, and not Gods; *Deut.* 7. 14. *If thou walk in his way, thou ſhalt be bleſſed above all People*; that is, if thou ſerve him according to his will, *Pſal.* 33. 12. *Bleſſed is the Nation whoſe God is the Lord*; that is, they choſe God for their God, and ſerve him as God, *Mat.* 5. 3, 4. &c. We may ſee who it be that in Chriſts account are bleſſed; not thoſe that are Rich and Potent, Honorable, or Mighty, but the *poor in Spirit, thoſe that mourn for their ſins, the Meek, the Merciful, the Pure in heart, thoſe that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, thoſe that are reviled and perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake, &c.* that is, thoſe that live holily towards God, and righteouſly towards Men, that make the word of God, the rule of their Lives; that ſervant that did his Maſters will in ſincerity, ſhall be bleſſed by him at his coming, *Mat.* 24. 46. He that in his Maſters abſcence improved his Talents well, ſhall be made Ruler

Ruler over much; *and enter into his Maſters joy*, Mat. 25.21. He that refreſhed the People of God according to the Will and Covenant of God, *ſhall receive a Kingdom prepared for him by God*, Mat. 25. 34. 46. Read *Deut.* 28. through out, And ſee there the Promiſes made to the obedient; and the Curſes denounced againſt the diſobedient, and ſee which are in the moſt hopeful way to happineſs; yet there are many that are apt to ſay with thoſe, *Job.* 21. 15. *Who is the Almighty that we ſhould ſerve him, or what profit is it to pray unto him?* or as *Pharaoh* in the like words, *Exod.* 5. 2. Who is the Lord that I ſhould obey him? I know not the Lord, neither will I obey him: but the Lord after made himſelf known in his deſtruction. There are many that have buſineſs they tell us to follow, and cannot live by the Scriptures, or hearing Sermons, neither have they time to pray in their Families, *&c.* But let theſe prayerleſs Families beware of the Curſe, *Jer.* 10. 25. *Pſal.* 79. 6. Haſt any greater buſineſs to do than to ſerve thy God, and ſecure thy Soul? as thou makeſt the world thy buſineſs, ſo 'tis like to be thy Portion; but it will leave thee ſhort of happineſs: the beſt of Saints, and the wiſeſt of Men, have taken another courſe, and have ſailed in a courſe of Holineſs, to the Port of Happineſs; for no other Wind blows thither. Enoch *walked with God, and God took him.* Gen. 5. 24. That is, he walked in the waies of God and obeyed the command of God: the like we read of Noah, *He was perfect in his Generation, and walked with God*, Gen. 6. 9. This courſe of life, *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* followed. *David* alſo, and *Hezekiah*, *Jehoſophat* and *Joſiah*, and many more; 'tis ſaid of theſe they ſerved God with a per-

fect heart. *Job*, was a juſt man and one that feared God, *Job* 1. 8. So was good *Obadiah*, 1 *King.* 18. 3. thus *Daniel* and his fellows, *Dan.* 3. 17. and 6. 2. thus *Paul*, *Cornelius*, *Zachary*, and *Elizabeth*, Act. 27. 23. and 10. 22. *Luk.* 1. 6. and thus was *Chriſt* himſelf, *no guile was found in his mouth*, 1 Pet. 2. 22. All theſe walked in the way of Holineſs to Heaven, Read a Liſt of more, *Heb.* 11. But there is no word of encouragement to any other to expect Heaven; nay, God tells us in plain words, they ſhall never come there; 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. Neither is there any one example of any that lived and dyed in their ſinful courſe, that ever was ſaved: what may we gather hence? but this, if ever you would attain to true happineſs, ſerve God with a ſincere heart.

7. *Motive*. Thou ſhouldeſt ſerve the Lord, becauſe as he is beſt able to reward thee for thy obedience, and pay thee for thy work; ſo is he beſt able to puniſh thee for thy diſobedience: For as all his promiſes are *yea and amen*, faithful and true to his People, ſo are his threatnings to his Enemies: thou art not at liberty to chooſe thy own Maſter, who thou wilt ſerve, thou art ingaged to him, and ſerve him thou muſt or do worſe; thou art his by right of Creation, for whoſe is the Pot but the Potters? And by right of Redemption he paid a price for thee, and bought thee dear: So alſo by Covenant right, thou haſt devoted thy ſelf to his ſervice, and taken Preſs mony to fight his Battels, and if thou revolt, he will avenge the quarrel of his Covenant againſt thee: Hence it is, thou mayſt well fear his wrath, and expect his judgments, if thou perfidiouſly betrayeſt thy truſt, and revolteſt to the Enemy. Chriſt himſelf bids thee not to

fear

fear thoſe that can kill the Body and can do no more, but fear him that can caſt Body and Soul into Hell, Luk. 12. 5. If he be not glorifyed by thee, he will be glorifyed upon thee; if he have not the glory of thy Salvation, he will have the glory of thy Deſtruction, *Luk.* 19. 27. *Thoſe mine Enemies that would not that I ſhould raign over them, bring them and ſlay them before my face:* God takes thoſe for his Enemies that will not be ruled by him, and will prove a ſore Enemy to them: And didſt thou know what it is to be an Enemy unto God, and what it is to have God to be an Enemy unto thee, it would ſend thee trembling to thy grave: 'tis he that hath the keys of life and death at his girdle; *He kills and he makes alive, he brings to the gates of death and back again, and there is none that can deliver out of his hand:* He need not muſter an Army againſt thee, to deſtroy thee, the leaſt Fly, or Gnat, or Hair may end thy life, if it have a Commiſſion from God: thou art but a Worm, if he tread upon thee, he leaves the dead behind him; if he withhold thy breath thou returneſt to the duſt, for thou haſt no more breath than what he puts into thee; how then canſt thou grapple with the Almighty? or contend with God? were thy fleſh of Braſs, and thy Sinnews of Iron, were thy foundations as the Earth, or as the Pillars of Heaven, thou wert yet too weak: who ever hardned himſelf againſt God and proſpered? whilſt thou remaineſt his Enemy, well mayſt thou fear his heavy hand, there is no judgment that ever thou readeſt threatned, or ever executed upon ſinful wretch, that thou canſt be ſecure from; Thou knoweſt not but the Waters may drown thee, as they did the old World, or as the Red Sea did *Pharaoh*, or fire from Heaven may

consume thee as it did *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and also *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and the two Captains and their Fifties at the prayer of *Elijah*; thou knowest not but the Plagues which fell upon *Egypt* may fall upon thee and consume thee, or that thy life may be ended by the Sword, the Famine, or the Pestilence: thou knowest not but an Angel may smite thee as *Herod*, and thou mayst be devoured with Worms; or that the Earth may open and swallow the quick, as it did *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*: thou knowest not but thou mayst be struck dead for the next lye thou tellest, as *Ananias* and *Saphirah* were; or whether Bears may not devour thee, as they did those Children that mocked the Prophet; or whether thou mayst not be stricken with Leprosie as *Gehazy*; or thy house may not fall upon thy head as upon *Jobs* Children. In a word, whatever a man destitute of Grace and Divine Protection may be brought to suffer, thou hast no assurance but it may be thy Portion, Read *Deut.* 28. 15. *&c.* Where thou mayst see thy own miserable condition; but this is not all, those spiritual judgments which are worse than these are seized upon thee: Blindness of Mind, Hardness of Hart, Searedness of Conscience, *&c.* And eternal judgements dog thee at the heels, and will certainly seize upon thee, except Repentance prevent it; as soon as Death makes a separation between Soul and Body: never any Unregenerate, Unrepenting, Unrighteous, or Unclean Person shall ever go to Heaven, *John* 3. 7. *Luk.* 13. 3. 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. *Rev.* 21. 13. and there is no middle place, for the Scripture owns no Purgatory, *Psal.* 9. 17. *The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God.* See the doom

doom of the wicked servant, *Mat*, 24.*last*. *He was cut in peices, and his Portion was appointed with the Hypocrites*: and that unprofitable Servant that improved not his Talent, *Mat*.25.30. *He was bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness*; and all the wicked, ungracious servants that improve not their Talents as God appointed shall then be bid; *Depart ye wicked into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, Mat. 25. 41. 48. This is Gods judgments to his Enemies, and this is the Devils wages to his friends and servants; who then would have such an Enemy, or such a Master? learn directions to serve God, as followeth in those duties mentioned.

CHAP. II.

Of Duties in General.

HAving in the fore-going Treatise, shewed you the Excellency, Necessity and Benefits of an Holy Life; and the deadly danger of all unholy Course; I hope many of you are resolved to alter that course of life: you have too long already lived in; and will begin to question what shall we do to be saved? To this end in this part, I shall point out some necessary duties, which every Christian is bound to perform, and lay down some directions by them for the right performance of them.

Now my desire is, that you would resolve to practice

practice what out of Gods word I shall prove to be your duty; otherwise to what end shall I write them, or you read them: what say say you, will you do it, or will you not? 'tis not a slight business, neither will a slight resolution serve your turn; you will meet with many Racks in the way, and therefore had need to be well grounded; with many storms of temptations, and therefore had need to lay a good foundation; you have spent too much time already in the service of Sin and Satan, and 'tis pity you should any longer serve so bad a Master: and now God gives you a call unto his service; methinks it should be no hard question to resolve, neither need you any great time to consider, whether God or the Devil be the best Master? whether Holyness or Sin be the better work? whether Heaven or Hell be the better wages? whether the Transitory Pleasures of Sin, or the endless joyes of Heaven be more desireable? hast thou need of much time to consider of this business? if thou yet stand at a stay, let me put in something that may turn the Scales: consider to whom thou art most engaged, to God or Satan? art not thou Gods by right of Creation? he made thee of nothing, and whose is the Pot, but the Potmakers? he made thee a Rational Creature, when he might have made thee a Brute Beast; a Toad or a Serpent, or the most despicable Worm that crawls under thy feet, and is it not he that maintains thee at his own Cost and Charges? thou hast not Food to eat, or Drink to drink, or Clothes to put on, but what he gives thee; neither Health nor Strength, Limbs nor Senses, Life nor Breath, but from him; 'tis his Corn and his Wine, that feeds thee, 'tis his Wool and his Flax that clothes thee,

thee; 'tis his Silver and his Gold that makes thee Rich, *Hoſ.* 2. 5. And is it yet a Queſtion, who ſhould be thy Maſter? Haſt any better Friend, or greater Benefactor? Nay, further; thou art his alſo by right of Redemption; when thou ſoldeſt thy ſelf to be a Slave to Satan, did not he buy thee by his precious Blood, out of that Helliſh Slavery? Did not he loſe his Life for thy Ranſom? Did not he lay down his Life to free thee from the guilt of ſin, and from the filth of ſin, and from the puniſhment due for ſin, from the wrath of God, the Curſe of the Law, the Slavery of Satan, and from everlaſting damnation? and haſt thou yet a better Friend to truſt to? The work God ſets thee about is wages as well as work; 'tis equal, 'tis reaſonable, 'tis honourable; his Yoak is eaſie, and his burthen light: The wages alſo differs; the one gives everlaſting Happineſs, the other endleſs miſery: and canſt not yet determine who ſhall be thy Maſter? Conſider then, what God minds in theſe his Commands; is it his own benefit, or thine? What profit is he like to have by thy Obedience? Or what damage by thy Diſobedience? Alas! thou art ſo far below him, thou canſt neither do him good or hurt: All the benefit or damage redounds to thy own Soul. Conſider alſo, what the Devil minds; doubtleſs, thy Ruine: *He goes about like a roaring Lyon, ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. And art not yet determined who ſhall be thy Maſter? Conſider then, whether ever thou kneweſt one Man that ever was made Happy by following a ſinful Courſe of Life: Or ever thou kneweſt one Man made miſerable by God's Service, or an Holy Courſe of Life. And now, if thou haſt reaſon, make uſe of it; and I doubt not,

if

if thou wouldst be brought to consideration, thou wouldst soon resolve. I shall at present take it for granted, and shall proceed; first, to give you some general Directions to be observed in all duties; and then descend to some particular duties unto God, and give Directions for these also: the general are these that follow.

1. *Direction.* In all the Duties thou performest to God or Man, see that thou hast a Divine warrant for it out of the Word of God; that which he Commands, is our Duty; and what he forbids, is our sin if we do it; where there is no Law, there is no Transgression; and where 'tis no Commanded Duty, there thou canst expect no Blessing; yet many Men are apt to invent ways for God's Worship, as if the Scripture were difficult; and, with the *Pharisees*, Teach for Doctrines, the Commandments of Men; they set up their Posts by God's Post, and their *Dagon* by God's Ark, but it will never stand; they take much pains, and be at much cost in the Worship of their own devising, but they will lose their Labour; and when they come for their Reward, God will ask them, who required these things at their hands? When therefore thou art prest unto a Duty, enquire whether God Command it, or at least, whether it be consonant to his Word, if not, reject it; we must not Worship God after Mens invention, or Humane Traditions, contrary to his revealed Will. God hath left us work enough to do, we need not invent more. We read indeed of some Idolaters that fained themselves gods, and then patcht up a kind of Idolatrous Worship to these gods; thus *Baals* Priests cut and wounded themselves till the blood gushed out, not much unlike to our Popish

piſh whippings: Some alſo poured out Drink-Offerings to the Queen of Heaven, and baked Cakes for her, *Jer.* 44. 17. Yea, ſome of them Offered their Children to *Molech*, and made them paſs through the Fire; yet all this Labour was loſt, yea, worſe than loſt, it became their ſin, becauſe it was to a ſtrange god. In like manner, many Worſhip the true God in a falſe manner, by giving him ſuch Worſhip he never Commanded, neither ever came it into his mind. But the Scripture is a ſufficient Rule for Worſhip, where all the material parts of Worſhip are preſcribed; only ſome neceſſary Circumſtances are left to Humane prudence to determine, as the Time, and Place, and other ſuch like, which may be altered according to the preſent occaſion; yet we read in Scripture of Voluntary Humility, and Worſhipping of Angels, but God doth not allow of it, *Col.* 2. 18. The Church of *Rome* doth therefore exceedingly err in thruſting upon us thoſe new invented, needleſs Ceremonies, ſuch as God never made, neither ever gave power to Man to intrude into his worſhip; yea, alſo they err in adding many things as Fundamentals, which are errors of their own deviſing, ſuch as their five added Sacraments, their private Maſs, Communicating in our kind, propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sick and dead, Prayers to Saints departed, and to Angels, Images, Crucifixes, Popes Pardons, Indulgences, Pilgrimages, and many more; but theſe wanting Authority, are not to be heeded by us; yea, amongſt us alſo we have too many Popiſh Superſtitions, received by Traditions, which God hath never warranted, and therefore we ought not to obſerve them. But in all thy Duties, whether it be

be an Act of Divine worſhip, or any Duty to thy Neighbour, ſearch the Scriptures, if it be not according to this Rule, own it not: See what need Chriſtians have of knowledge to know what is ſin, and what is Duty; what is Commanded, and what forbidden.

2. *Direct.* When thou knoweſt thy Duty, and haſt a Divine Command for it, delay not, but ſet upon it; many undo themſelves by delays, they think to do that hereafter, which they never Live to do; practice is the Life of all. Set upon the performance of thoſe Duties which God requires at thy Hands; take them as they lye, and do not pick and chuſe. 'Tis the practice of ſome Men, and thoſe of no ſmall note, for Religion, to pick and chuſe their Duties; this they will do, and this they will not do; they ſcum off the Fat and ſweet of Duty, and leave the difficult, dangerous, coſtly part of Duty undone; but this is not ſufficient, neither will it evidence any one to be a Chriſtian indeed: Many, eſpecially great ones, run on with this miſtake; for a little Grace makes a great ſhew in a great Man, yea, oft-times the ſhew is taken for the Subſtance; many will perform ſuch Duties as are in Credit in the world, and like to coſt them but a little, which yet refuſe ſelf-denying, difficult or dangerous Duties. They will hear, and read, and confer, and, perhaps, pray in their Families, and ſome other ſuch like External parts of worſhip; and if God will be pleaſed with theſe, and Heaven will be had upon ſuch terms, they will have it: but if he require ſelf denyal duties, or thoſe which croſs their own Intereſt, if they muſt take up the Croſs and follow him, and deny themſelves, hate and forſake Father

Father or Mother, Wife or Children, Lands or Livings, Pleaſure or Honour, Liberty or Life, for his ſake; they will not buy Heaven at ſo dear a rate. But God is reſolved he will abate nothing, and they are reſolved they will bid no more; and ſo they part. But hath not the ſame God Commanded the one as well as the other? And hath he not wiſdom enough to know which is the beſt, and neareſt way to Heaven? Or would he willingly torment his Creatures, and put his Servants to unneceſſary Troubles? Can theſe Men think to find out a nearer way to Heaven than God hath preſcribed? Or that they ſhall ever come there without his knowledge, without the Qualifications he requires. Surely they are much miſtaken; yet how ordinary is it even for Profeſſors themſelves to ſtudy Arguments for ſin, and againſt duty, when the one ſuits with their Carnal Intereſt, and the other croſſes it. But Chriſtians that have taken Chriſt upon his own terms, and are delivered from the power of ſin and Satan, think they can never do enough for Chriſt. They are always queſtioning, what ſhall I do for him, that hath done ſo much for me? *What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?* Pſal. 118. 12. 'Tis the very end why we are delivered from our Enemies, *to ſerve God in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all the days of our Lives*, Luke 1. 74, 75. 'Tis the mark of thoſe that Love God, to keep his Commandments, *John* 14. 15. When others perform duties only in Subſerviency to their own Carnal Intereſts, and therefore only own that part and duty that ſuits with their deſigns, as *Jehu*, in his Reformation of Idolatry, and ſet up their Staff, and ſay, hitherto will I go, and no further; then a godly Man that makes

makes the enjoyment of God his ultimate end and aim, will, like *Daniel* to the Lyons Den, or the three Children to the Fiery Furnace, before they will either neglect known duties, or commit known sins: Others are forward in the cheap part, but backward in the costly part of duty; and the Devil might also buy their Profession it self out of their Hands; many that will hear, and read, and pray, because it costs them little, yet will hardly be perswaded to be Charitable to the Poor, and Liberal to Pious Uses, because 'tis costly; or to forgive Injuries, love Enemies, make Restitution of ill gotten Goods, venture their Estates, Lives, or Liberty, when the Cause of God requires it; then they cry out, with *Naaman*, *the Lord be merciful to me in this thing*: but God will abate nothing of his price, he will have Universal Obedience, or he will own none at all.

3. *Direct.* Wouldst thou perform Duties in an acceptable manner? Then hold on in a constant course of Duty; 'tis not enough to begin well, but thou must hold out well: The same Reason that perswaded thee to enter into such a Course of Duty at the first, may perswade thee to hold out to the end; there is the same ground for the one, as for the other: If it be because storms arise, Troubles and Persecutions look thee in the Face, this might have been fore-seen; thou shouldst have sate down first, and reckoned the Charges; Christ told thee before, *Through many Tribulations we must come to Heaven.* He that is now ashamed of Christ and his Cross of Service, the time is coming, Christ will be ashamed of him: Thou must follow him through thick and thin; through good Report, and evil Report, or thou art like

to

to lose him; yea, though thou meet Death it self in the Face. 'Tis not he that sets out well, but he that continues to run well, is like to get the Prize; 'tis not he that gives the On-set, but he that Fights well, is like to get the Victory: *You did run well*, saith the Apostle, *who hindred you?* Gal. 5. 7. *So run, that you may obtain*, 1 Cor. 9. 24. 'Tis not he that begins well, but he that holds out to the end, shall be saved, *Mark* 13. 13. 'Tis *he that is Faithful to the Death, that shall receive the Crown of Life*, Rev. 2. 10. Many Promises are made to those that overcome, *Rev.* 2. 11. 17. 26. & 3. 5. 12. 21. There are many, that in a day of Gospel Prosperity, cry *Hosanna* unto Christ; but when storms are up, then cry, *Crucifie him.* This Age gives too full a Testimony to this Truth. But those that are Faithful to God will be constant in his Service, what danger soever looks them in the Face. Many are like to Weather-Cocks, turn with every Wind; or like a Ship without Ballast, are tossed with every Storm: But a sincere Christian is like a Ship in the Harbour, that hath a sure and stedfast Rock to Anchor upon. Many are like the Planet *Mercury*, good in a good Conjunction, and bad with the bad: Or like *Proteus*, that can turn themselves into any shape for Advantage; but a true Christian gives this for his Motto, *Semper idem*, always the same; the change of Times, the change of Company, the change of Religion, makes no change in him; he knows God changes not: Poverty and Prosperity are God's trying Times, wherein may be discovered what is in the Heart; *Hazael*, when a mean Man, never thought so much evil had been in his Heart, as appeared to be there when he was Advanced. The stony

ground did not at first appear to be so deceitful, as indeed it proved. But Holy *Job* was the same on the dung-hill, as on the Throne; in Adversity, as in Prosperity; he did not serve God for Riches, nor will he forsake him in Poverty: Hast thou been a Professor of Religion, and hast thou hitherto performed the duties Commanded? What madness now possesses thee, that thou wilt leave his Service? What canst thou object against him? Is the Devil a better Master? Or will he set thee about better work? Or will he give thee better wages? If Religion be not good, why didst embrace it at first? If it be, why dost leave it? If thou now leave off, all thy Labour, and all the pains that ever thou hast taken will be utterly lost in reference to Salvation; *If the Righteous forsake his ways, all his Righteousness shall not be remembred to him, in his sin he shall dye*, Ezek. 18. 24. It may be thou hast gone many a Mile to hear Sermons, spent many an Hour in Prayer, and Humiliation, & many a Day in Fasting, and Humbling thy Soul; and wilt thou lose all thy Labour at the last? Nay, wilt thou now dishonour that God, which time was thou seemedst to Honour? And wilt thou strengthen the hand of Wicked Men in their wickedness? And weaken the hands of poor doubting Christians? And sadden the Hearts of the godly? Wilt thou bring the Blood of Souls upon thy own head? If not, hold on in a course of Holy Duty, whatever opposition thou meet with in the way; Heaven will make amends for all the sweat and blood thou loseſt; and Hell will be sower sauce to thy sweet Meat: What madness is it, to leave thy work a little before thou shouldest receive thy Wages?

4. *Direct.* Let all the Duties thou performeſt, either to God, or Man, proceed from a right Principle; from a Heart ſanctified by Grace, and puri-fied by Faith, and ſeaſoned with Love. Make the Tree good, and his Fruit will be good; but a Corrupt Tree bringeth forth evil Fruit. An evil Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit, nor a good Tree evil Fruit. 'Tis impoſſible that a Corrupt Fountain ſhould ſend forth ſweet Water, or a filthy Veſſel ſweet Liquor. Let the Love of God be the ſtrongeſt Motive to thy Obedience, and let this engage thy heart to every Duty: Though thou ſhouldeſt do the duty required, if thou do it not in obedience to that Command, God will not own it. Whatever thou doſt, do all to his Glory, and in Obedience to his Command, or thou wilt loſe thy Reward; let thy heart ſay in ſincerity, *Propter te propter te Domine*; it is for thy ſake, and in Obedience to thy Command that I do it, and for no ſiniſter reſpect whatſoever. Hypocrites may do the thing which God Commands, but from another ground, and for another end; they ſavour of the Cask, and ſmell of ſelf-Intereſt; they reach no higher than themſelves, as water aſcends no higher than the Fountain Head. *Jehu* did what God Commanded in deſtroying Idolatry, and rooting out *Ahab's* Poſterity; but all this whi'e he hath a Kingdom in his Eye. But the Love of God Oyls the Chariot-Wheels of a Chriſtians endeavours; it carryeth him above, beyond, and out of himſelf. God tells him what he would have done, a Chriſtian never examines the Command by any Carnal Intereſt, whether he may reap gain, or loſs, Honour, or Diſgrace by it; come what come will, he reſolves to do it, if God com-

mand it, whatever ſtands in his way, though he meet Death it ſelf in the Face, he will go on, God calls him; and, with *Samuel*, he cryeth out, *Speak, Lord, for thy Servant heareth*; he knows he that ſets him on work, can bear him out. Now, all Service that ariſeth not from this ground, is ſlaviſh, and mercinary, and merits nothing at Gods hands but blows; he that doth the thing Commanded, and knoweth not of the Command, doth not Obey God in the work; and if he know that it is Commanded, and doth it, yet not becauſe it was Commanded, but upon other account, God will not Reward this as Obedience. The *Phariſees* knew that Prayer, Faſting, and Alms-deeds were Commanded duties; yea, they performed thoſe duties, but not becauſe God Commanded them, but that they might be applauded by Men; therefore Chriſt ſends them to men for a Reward, *Mat.* 6. 1, 2, 3, &c. The performance of a duty will do us little good, if we cannot ſay, with the Apoſtle, *The Love of Chriſt conſtraineth us.* Many are conſtant attenders upon the Ordinances, not out of Love to God, or Obedience to his Will, or any delight they have in the duty, but for fear of puniſhment, or hope of reward, either from God or Man; or for popular Applauſe, or one thing or other of that Nature; and theſe Men, perhaps, in the mean time have their hands upon the works, and their Hearts buſied in the Devils Service; and they look upon Gods Service as a Slavery, and glad when they are Releaſed. But a ſincere Chriſtian is like the Servant mentioned, *Exod.* 21. 15. that ſaith, *I Love my Maſter, I will not go Free*; though there were neither Reward in Heaven, for my Obedience, nor puniſhment in Hell, for my Diſobedience;

disobedience, I will do it because 'tis my Masters will, and I delight in the work it self; this Love of God in the Soul, is as weights to the Clock, or as Oyl to the Jack, it sets it on work for God: love makes labour light, they do it for Conscience sake, *Rom.* 13. 5. when others do it for gains sake. *Saul* obeys for a Kingdom, and *Jehu* for a Crown, and when this was obtained, their Obedience was over; they are like to Dogs, they follow their Master till they meet with Carrion: examine now thy heart, what is the ground of thy obedience, if it be lower than thy love to God, and desire to obey him, 'tis not right.

5. *Direction*, Let all thy duties whether to God or Man, be performed in the manner which God requires; now Christ himself tells thee, *God is a Spirit, and he that worships him, must worship him in Spirit*, John 4. 24. and the Apostle tells us, *that bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. 'Tis not the Motions of the Body, nor the moveing of the Lips, 'tis not Bowings, Couchings, Cringings that he is affected with, if the Heart and Affections go not along; this is one main difference between a sincere Christian, and an Hypocrite; both may do the same Duty, both may joyn in the same Prayer, and both may hear the same Sermon, yet one may be accepted, and the other not; nay, for the Bulk and Materiallity of the Duty, the Hypocrite may exceed the other; the *Pharisees* they fasted, they gave almes, they made long Prayer, they tythed Mint and Anice, and yet all this while lay under the Curse, and were Enemies to God, and persecutors of Christ; their heart was absent from their duty, and it was not right to God, they lost all their la-

bour in Heavens way, because they had little trading with, and little knowledg of God, or their own hearts: Hypocrites feed upon the husks of duty, nnd never meet with Christ in the duty; when a sincere heart hath trading with God, and sweet communion with Christ himself: if ever therefore thou wouldst perform pleasing Sacrifice to God, be sure to wind up thy heart and affections unto God, and never content thy self with any duty till thou meet with Christ in the duty; duties are appointed to be done, not for their own sakes, but to help the Soul to mount up to Heaven upon their wings, which is the place of its rest: in them the Soul is trading with God for Christ, and if we make not this use of them, they will do us no good. God regards not so much the external part of duty, though this is not to be disregarded, as he doth the internal; he looks, especially at the carriage of the heart in the duty; *my Son saith he, give me thy heart*, if this be present, many infirmities shall be past over; if this be absent, though the duty be never so gloriously acted in the eye of of the World, it is hateful in the eye of God: *Cain* and *Abel* both offered Sacrifice, and in the matter of their Sacrifice we know not, the one exceeded the other, yet one was accepted, and the other rejected: why what was the matter? because the one was accompanyed with Sincerity, the other with Hypocrisie; and as God, so all good Men make it their business to look to the heart in duty, they carry it along with them to God, and offer it at his feet, they know the more of the heart is in the duty, the better God loves it; and the more of the heart is in the sin, the worse it is: they look more and grieve more at the miscarriage of the Heart in a duty,

duty, when it lyes dead, or dull, than at a miſs expreſſion, or external failing; when thou comeſt therefore unto God in duty, gather in thy ſcattered thoughts and affections, and let them meet here as lines do in a Center, or as the Sun-beams in a burning glaſs; this will make thy Prayers Hot and Fervent, which otherwiſe would be Cold and Remiſs; when our Spirits are raiſed by the Spirit of God, and the Fleſh kept under in the duty, then we are like to prevail: 'tis not the Multitude of looſe or lone, and cold expreſſions will ſerve turn; the *Phariſees* out-did many Chriſtians in long Prayers; but 'tis the Spiritual performance that God requires; cold Petitions do but put denyals into Chriſts mouth, we muſt perform every duty as if it were for Life and Death, for Eternity; yea, as if it were our laſt duty that ever we ſhould perform: ſuch performances as theſe are acceptable to God, and beneficial to Man.

6. *Direction*, Thou muſt perform all thy duties as in a right Manner, ſo to a right End; for the End either Makes or Marrs the Action: now the Ends are ſuch as God himſelf hath appointed in his word. Now God never ordained duties, or good works to be truſted in for Salvation; thou cauſt never merit Heaven by thy Prayers, or other Duties; they were not commanded for this end, indeed they are a *cauſa ſine qua non* of Salvation: for though they cannot ſave us, yet we ſhall not be ſaved in the neglect of them, they are the way to the Kingdom, though not *cauſa regnandi*, *Chriſt hath purchaſed to himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good works*; they are of ſpecial uſe for us, in the way that God hath appointed us to walk in, God hath appointed us to do them, and threatened us,

and will punish us if we neglect them; as I shall more fully prove when I treat of them particularly; and that it is Gods will and command, is enough to satisfy an honest heart, though there were neither reward, nor punishment for the doers, or neglecters of them: this is the way to glorify God, *John* 15. 8. *Hereby is our Heavenly Father glorified, when we bring forth much fruit.* Mat. 5. 18. *Let your Light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.* By this means also we may be instrumental of others Conversion. Wives are commanded to carry themselves so holily and wisely, that thereby unbelieving Husbands may be won to the Faith, 1 *Pet.* 3. 1. and as they may do good to others, so they may bring comfort to themselves; these breathings out of Grace, will be an Evidence to the Soul of the love of God, when we find the Spirit helping our infirmities, teaching us how, and for what to pray: these products of Grace will yield the Soul no little satisfaction; yea, by this means we obtain many blessings from God: what sweet returns of Prayer have the Saints had? how often hath God answered them in the very Petitions they have asked? Christ bids them *ask and they shall have; seek and they shall find; knock and it shall be opened to them*; and how many can experience this truth? though God promise the mercy, yet he will be sought to for it, and what sweet and ravishing incomes of the Spirit of God have Christians oftentimes in the Hearing, Reading, Meditating, and conferring of the word of God; receiving of the Sacrament, and other Religious duties? and what Satisfaction and Comfort? 'Tis true, we must not trust to them for comfort,

fort, as the Cauſe, but as the Inſtrument: *Hezekiah* found Comfort upon his ſick Bed from the Faithful performance of God's Will. But this is not all; one ſpecial end why God appointed them, is to bring the Soul nearer unto Chriſt by them, and to this end we muſt uſe them; they are as Ladders to help us up to Heaven, to lift us above our ſelves, to lay hold upon Chriſt; we muſt make uſe of them, as a Traveller doth of a Boat or Bridge, to help us over unto Chriſt; or as he doth of a Staff, or Stile, to help him in his Journey; though they in themſelves have no Excellency, yet they help us over where true Treaſure is; though they be empty in themſelves, and vain to thoſe that truſt in them, yet are they enriching to the Saints that truſt not to them, but uſe them for the ends appointed; but many, like Fooliſh Lovers, wooe the Maid, when they ſhould Court the Miſtreſs; or like Fooliſh Travellers, play with the Stile, or fall in Love with the Boat, and neglect their way; they truſt to their duties; but theſe were never appointed to ſave us, or to make up Chriſt's Merits Satisfactory, for this is ſufficient; but that it may help us to lay hold upon Chriſt's Satisfaction: Uſe them therefore for that end.

7. *Direct.* When thou haſt done all this, and all that thou canſt, ſay thou art an unprofitable Servant, and haſt done no more; nay, not ſo much as was thy duty, *Luke* 17. 10. And take heed of reſting in, or truſting to any thing but Chriſt for Juſtification or Salvation; truſt not to thy duties, for they will deceive thee; and prove like *Egyptian* Reeds, not only break, but run into thy hand; they were never appointed for this end, to truſt

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to them; let the Papists brag never so much of their Works of Supererogation, or of their Merits; let the Ignorant Person brag of his good meaning, his good heart, and his good serving God; let the Civil Man brag of his paying every Man his own, and upright dealing; and the almost Christian of his Repenting, Returning, and Reforming; alas! all this will deceive them, this is not the Blood of Christ, we must have some better shelter to keep off the storms of God's fiery Indignation: the Prophet tells us, *all our Righteousnesses is as filthy Rags, or a menstruous Cloath*, Isa. 6. 6. And will God, think you, delight in this? The Heart, which is the Fountain, is Corrupt, and never cleansed from Original Corruption; and can we think the streams thence issuing can be sweet? This bitter Root sends many branches of Actual sin, which mix themselves with our best duties, and make them abominable in the Eyes of God: These are the dead Flyes that spoyl all the Oyntment; we cannot do a duty, but we spoyl it in the doing: and if we could, unless we could do every duty thus to the end of our Lives, what Advantage should we have by that one? We must Live free from evil thoughts, vain words, and evil Actions, or we cannot stand approved by God; nay, if we could do so, and Live free from the least Transgression for the future, this will not discharge us of our fore-past Debt; will the constant payment of Rent for the future, clear up the arreares that are behind? 'Tis a vain thing to think to be saved by our own good works, or justified by our good duties: Alas! they are too much defiled with sin, and self to be satisfactory to God; and yet how ready are Men to lay hold upon any thing

thing that will give them the leaſt hope, and truſt to good hearts, and good duties, and good meanings, when there is no ſuch thing; and loath they are to come out of themſelves, confeſs themſelves to be ſuch Bankrupts, as indeed they are; but the vanity of theſe hopes, I ſhall give you in the words of an able Divine, who ſpeaks fully to my purpoſe; who tells thee, *that thou canſt not bring a perfect Righteouſneſs into the preſence of God, and haſt no Chriſt to truſt unto; thou muſt deſire and pray till Heaven and Earth ſhake; till thou haſt worn thy Tongue to the ſtumps, endeavour as much as thou canſt, and others commend thee for an exact Chriſtian, mourn in ſome Wilderneſs till dooms day, dig thy Grave with thy nails, weep Buckets full of hourly Tears, till thou canſt weep no more; Faſt and Pray, till thy skin and bones cleave together; promiſe, and purpoſe with full reſolution to be better; yea, reform thy Head, Heart, Life, and Tongue; leave ſome, nay, all ſin; Live like an Angel, ſhine like a Sun, walk up and down the World like a diſtreſſed Pilgrim; ſo that all that ſee thee may commend, and admire thee; dye ten thouſand Deaths, lye at the Fire back of Hell as many millions of Years as there are Graſs piles upon the Earth, Sands on the Sea ſhore, Stars in Heaven, or Motes in the Sun. I tell thee, not one ſpark of Gods wrath will be quenched by all theſe Duties, for they are not the Blood of Chriſt*, &c. Shepherd, Sincere Convert.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Directions in Hearing the Word.

HAving given you some general Directions necessary in all Duties, without which no duty, either to God, or Man can be acceptable to God. I shall next descend to some particulars which God requires at our hands, and lay down some Directions, how they may be performed to God's Glory, and the Souls Advantage; for 'tis not the meer doing of a duty, but the well doing of it that attains these ends. The first I shall mention, is that great duty of hearing God's Word: (As for the Preaching of it, I shall give Directions among those Relative duties; which, God willing, I intend to Treat of in it's place.) If I could sufficiently instruct you in this, I need not speak much of the rest; for this would be a help in all the other: for in the Word are Directions for the other also. I need not stand to prove this is a duty, I hope few will deny it. As for those that are above Ordinances, so as to neglect them, Time hath discovered their Folly: doth not God send his Messengers to Preach, and is it not our duty to Hear? The Apostle tells us, *Necessity is laid upon him, and woe to him if he preach not the Gospel*, 1 Cor. 9. 18. And is Preaching their duty, and is not Hearing ours? Yea, doth not Christ himself teach us how to Hear? And gives us Cautions to that purpose; to *take heed how we hear, And what we hear?* Mark 4. 24. Luke 8. 18. And oftentimes calls upon those that have Ears

Ears to hear, that they should hear; and in many Parables gives Directions about hearing, as in the Parable of the Sower and the Seed; of the good Seed, and the Tares, and many more. But my business is at present only by way of Motive, to put you on to the Duty; and by way of Direction to help you in it: I shall at present use those Motives, drawn from the benefit of the Word; for who is not moved with Profit and Gain? But here is the greatest gain to be had, 'tis the ordinary means to bring Men to Christ; I say, the ordinary means, for God is not tyed to it, *Rom.* 10. 14, 17. *Faith cometh by hearing*; to this end God sends *Paul* to the Gentiles, *to open their Eyes, and to turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the power of Satan unto God*, Acts 26. 17, 18. When Christ met with *Paul* in the way, *Acts* 9. 9, 10. He doth not Instruct him himself, but sends him to be Instructed by *Ananias*; and when he sent an Angel to *Cornelius*, it was not to Preach the Gospel to him, but to direct him to *Peter*, *Acts* 10. 35. It was by Preaching that *Peter* Converted 3000. at one time, *Acts* 2. 37. 41. The Word is the Seed, that being sown in a good heart, fructifies abundantly, *Mat.* 13. 8. The neglect of this is threatned, *Mat.* 10. 14. Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, *&c.* It shall be more tolerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* in the day of Judgment, than for them; and few are brought in that neglect this Duty: Nay, 'tis of daily use to those that are Converted, to build them up; it is the Milk that must nourish them, and make them grow; for where there is Life, there must be Food: *David*, by this means became wiser than his Teachers, and had more Understanding than

than the Antient, and what condition soever a poor soul is in here, he may find directions. Art thou in sorrow and distress? here consolation is to be had; here the Soul by faith sucks sweetness out of the Promise: art thou in affliction? here are Cordials to uphold a fainting heart, directions to bear them well, and promises of a seasonable deliverance: if thou run astray, here thou maist hear a voice behind thee, saying, this is the way walk in it, God hath here set way-marks to guide thee: If thou be dead, or dull, here are rousing considerations to quicken thee: if thy faith be weak, here it may be strengthned: if thy Soul be sin sick, here is a Physitian directed to, and a Potion prescribed will effect the cure: If thou art troubled with Satens Temptations, here is Armour of proof, the Sword of the Spirit for thy defence, with which Christ himself broke the Serpents head, *Mat.* 4.4, 7, 10. In a word, here is that way to life pointed out unto thee, that will never fail; when all the learning in the World, and all Humane Policy, and good Meanings and Intentions will deceive: now that thou maist hear with profit, take these directions following.

1. *Direct.* If thou wouldst hear with Profit, resolve then to break through all the difficulties, and oppositions that lye in thy way; for doubtless there will be many snares laid for thee, and thou wilt find many hinderances to this duty; many Enemies will appear, and without a strong Resolution to go through, what ever danger lyes in the way, thou wilt hardly hold out. I do not mean that the cursory hearing of the Word is thus opposed, but the practising of it when heard. The Devil is a sworn Enemy, and therefore expect he will

will do his worſt. Thou ſhalt find, that if he can have his will, there ſhall never Godly Miniſter be ſetled: Do you not ſee what oppoſiton is rais'd, what contention breaks out, before a faithful Paſtor can be ſetled; what Inſtruments doth he uſe to hinder the work? Who will neither ſpare Coſt nor pains in the buſineſs. Or, if they be ſetled, how oft doth he raiſe one or other to worry them, and make them weary of their places, if not of their Lives? For he knows ſuch as theſe Diſcover his wiles, and hinder his Trade; and if he can but ſtop their Mouths, and drive them out into the Wilderneſs, he may Rule without controul. It be not the Drunken, Debauched Clergy that he fears, theſe bring Fiſh to his Net. If this will not prevail, he endeavours then to work ſuch a prejudice in the Hearers Hearts, to their Miniſters, that they ſeldom profit by them: if they can have nothing againſt them, but concerning the Law of their God, yet he perſwades them they are Phanaticks, becauſe more ſerious in Religion than ſome others are; and ſo diverts what he can from hearing them, and then he thinks himſelf ſure of them. Sometimes he ſets them about their Worldly buſineſs, or to go to Fairs, *&c.* He knows there is no danger to him in that; or perſwades them to drouſe, or ſleep out their time, or ſit idly at home, or ſpend the Sermon time at Dice, or Cards, or other unlawful Games: For others, he hath a Companion at the Ale-houſe door to call them; he knows there they are ſecure. If thou break through theſe difficulties, he will endeavour to lull thee aſleep in the Congregation; or if awake, to diſtract thy thoughts with Worldly buſineſs, that when thy Body is in the Congregation, thy

thy mind ſhall be in the ſhop or Fields; or, perhaps, he may let thy Eyes wander upon this Beauty, or that new Faſhion, and thus divert thy mind from thy Duty. And thoſe that would be very attentive at a Stage-Play, are very heartleſs at a Sermon, as if it did not ſo much concern them; or, if thou doſt hear attentively, yet he will make thee a forgetful Hearer, and pick up the Seed as faſt as 'tis ſown, *Mat.* 13.4.19. How often do men leave all behind them at the Church door? and that man cannot give an Account of one paſſage in a whole Sermon, that can give you a large account of a Stage-Play, or idle Tale, or Story; or, if any thing be remembred, it muſt be ſome miſexpreſſion, or ſomething that muſt render the Preacher contemptible, and ſo bring him into Queſtion: And if they remember any thing that is good, the Devil perſwades them they ſhall never practice it; or, at leaſt, defer it till hereafter: or if they practice any, it muſt be the light, and cheap, and eaſie part of Duty, and ſo as good never a whit, as never the better. Theſe, and a thouſand ſuch, are the wiles of the Devil to keep thy Soul in bondage, which if he do, thou art undone for ever. He hath Inſtruments alſo which he ſets on work, wicked men; ſome to draw, and ſome to drive; ſome by one means, ſome by another, to hinder thee. Oh! take heed what you do, ſays one, you will run your ſelf upon the pike of danger; you'l make your ſelf contemptible to the World, ſaith another; you'l hazard your Eſtate, or Liberty, crys a third; our Fore-Fathers, ſaith another, were honeſt men, yet never followed theſe Courſes. Others, on the other hand, will load you with ſcoffs, and ſcorns; and

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if this serve not, with down-right Persecution: and, which is most dangerous, thy own deceitful heart will side with Satan, and help to betray thee; Carnal reason is ready to suggest, what need so much ado, there was never good World since there was so much Preaching? when, alas! the cause is not in the much Preaching, but in the little practice. Now, having so many Enemies, you must come with a full Resolution to break through, or never begin.

2. *Direction*, If thou wouldest profit by the word Preached; be sure to propound to thy self right ends, & take heed of the by ends, wch. many bring; 'tis the end that makes or marres the action; many glorious works have been spoiled by a bad end. Let the duty be never so excellently performed, if the end thou aimest at in the performance be not right, the duty is abominable in Gods account; thus the Fasting, Prayer, and Almes deeds of the *Pharisees*, though all commanded duties, were by God rejected, because it was popular applause they aimed at, *Mat.* 6. 1, 2, 3, *&c.* Thou maist hear all the daies of thy life to no profit, as too many do, if thy ends be not good; ask thy self therefore this question, when thou comest to the Ordinance: What do I here? or what errand come I about? what is my end in coming? or what do I desire? or would get by hearing? and get thy Heart and Conscience to return an answer; and if thy ends arise no higher than thy self, they are false and deceitful: if every man would speak out, or if we could hear the voice of Conscience speaking within them, we should find many false hearted, that neither perform the duty in obedience to God, neither take they pleasure in the duty it self; may not some of you say? 'tis not love to God, or his Word, but

for Customes sake we come; We and our Fathers before us were alwayes good Churchmen; but if this be all, thy ends are low and base: others might say, we come to hear of some easier way to Heaven, wherein we might go with our Sins in our hearts, and the World upon our backs; but these Men cannot endure Soul-seeking Sermons, but cry out of such Preachers, as *Ahab* of *Micajah*, he never Propheſies good of me, but evil; and therefore they hate them, as *Herodias* did *John Baptiſt*; and delights in those that daub with untempered Mortar, and cry *peace, peace, when there is no peace.* Many, especially of the Younger sort, they come to see, and to be seen; to shew their New Cloaths, or observe the Fashion that other wear; and being Examined, this is most they can remember. Many come that they may be accounted forward Professors, and are tickled with popular Applause; but when 'tis more in Credit to Persecute than profess, these, perhaps, follow that Profession. Some come, with the Butterflie, to paint her Wings, and these are all for gaudy Notions, and store their Heads, and not their Hearts with what they Learn; some weary of their own Houses, come to drive away the time; perhaps, to get a nap of sleep; some come for fear of the Law, lest that take hold upon them; and some to stop the mouth of Conscience, which otherwise will give them no rest; some come to speak with a Friend, which otherwise they knew not how to meet with so conveniently; and as they came by chance, 'tis a great Chance if they receive any good by their coming: Some come to enquire out some good bargain, others to appoint some merry Meeting, or some drunken match, or Game

Game at Cards, or Dice, or Bowls; and, perhaps, some come on purpose to entrap the Minister in his Words, or wrest them to a wrong Sentence: these Mens memories are much like to Sives, they keep the refuse, all the best runs through; Christ himself had such Hearers: if these, or like to these, be thy ends, thy heart is rotten, thy Duties stink in God's Nostrils, and they will never do thee good; thou mayst expect a Curse from God, and not a Blessing. But a true Christian aims at higher ends, *viz.* that he may know his Masters will, and knowing, may obey it, and may glorifie him by obeying; and by this means he may get nearer unto Christ, and have, and maintain more Communion with him; that he may know more of the Excellency that is in Christ; that he may be more enamoured on him; that he may see more of his own heart, and the deceitfulness of it; and more of the vileness of sin, to hate it more; that we may have clearer Evidences of God's Love to his Soul, and of his Interest in Christ; these, and such like are a Believers ends, in hearing the Word. If now thy ends be lower, 'tis a bad sign of an Hypocritical, or Prophane heart.

3. *Direct.* If thou wouldst profit by the Word preach'd, come unto it with thy heart rightly qualified, and rightly disposed, with thy affections rightly ordered. One reason amongst others why so many come to, and return from the Word empty, is, because the heart is not fitted for the Duty: get thy heart in Love with God; this is the way to thrive by his Word: how greedily do we read a Letter from a Friend, especially if we expect some promise in it of some great Courtesie?

the Word is Gods Epistle sent from Heaven, stuff'd thick with gracious promises; if we entertain hard thoughts of God, we seldom profit by his word; get a love also to his Word, as *David, O how love I thy law, it is my Meditation continually*: we remember that which we love; What is the reason that many can remember an idle story, or love song, or stage play, that cannot remember one passage, or sentance in a whole Sermon? why, because they love it better: exercise love also to the Minister, or thou wilt hardly profit by his preaching: prejudice is a great hindrance to the Soul. See this in *Ahab*, he had a prejudice against *Micaiah*, and hated him, and therefore his wholesom counsel was rejected, 1 *Kings* 22. 8. *&c.* The Pharisees also having a prejudice against Christ, carp't and cavilled with him; but few or none believed in him: which of the Scribes and Pharisees have believed on him? all his gratious words would not win upon them: and when a People have a prejudice against their Pastour, ten to one they profit little by him. Come also with a believing heart, *the word which they heard profited them not, because it was not mixt with faith in them that heard it*, Heb. 4. 2. If the Devil can but bring us to this distrust in God, and to call in question the truth of his word; he hath what he would have: for who will leave a certain Inheritance, for an uncertain Hope? and take much pains when they doubt of a recompence; or leave beloved Sins, or perform self denying duties, upon such uncertainties? they should bring also humble hearts to the duty, for 'tis the *humble that God will teach, when he looks upon the proud afar off*, James 4. 5. 1 Pet. 5. 5. A proud Spirit is like *Laodicea*, and *thinks himself rich and wants*

wants nothing, when he is poor, and blind, and miserable, and naked. Rev. 3. 16, 17. If there be any in the Congregation that ſet themſelves againſt God and his Word; 'tis commonly the Proud and ſelf conceited Perſons: it were them that ſet themſelves againſt *Jeremy*, Jer. 42. 3. It were the Proud men that ſaid he ſpake falſly in the Name of the Lord. He that comes with abſence of his own wants, is moſt like to have a ſupply; he that comes with a conceit of his own righteouſneſs, is likely to go away empty; *he fills the hungry with good things, but the rich he ſends empty away*, Luk. 1. 53. *He that thinks he knows any thing, knows nothing, that he ought to know*, 1 *Cor.* 8. 2. Come therefore to the Ordinance with an Hungring, Longing, Thirſting, Panting deſire after this Bread of Life, and Sincere Milk of the Word; for then thou art moſt like to prevail for ſomthing to fill thy Soul. *A full Soul loatheth the Hony-comb, but to an hungry Soul every bitter thing is ſweet*: many Promiſes are made to the hungry; thoſe that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs are bleſſed, *Mat.* 5. 6. theſe thirſting Souls ſhall have Wine and Milk, Chriſt and his Graces without Money or Moneys worth, *Iſa.* 5. 51. Come not with a ſlight apprehenſion of, or a ſlight deſire after it, leſt it be denyed thee; ſet not light by it, as thoſe that were bidden to the Wedding. *Mat.* 22. 2. *&c. David* had high prizing thoughts of it, *it was ſweeter to him than honey, and the honey-comb, yea better than thouſands of Gold and Silver*, Pſalm 19. 10. and to *Job*, better than his appointed food: this made *David* meditate in it day and night; and by this means he came to have more underſtanding than his Teachers; bring alſo a mind free from Worldly cares,

and fears, and desires; these are the Thorns that choak the Word, *Mat.* 13. 22. Bring not the Love of any sin along with thee, for this will make the Word unprofitable: he that saith, I will not be made clean; God may say, thou shalt never be made clean; resolve to obey the Word in the strictest passages of it.

4. *Direct.* Wouldest thou profit by the Word Preached? 'Tis necessary then that thou make some preparation for the receiving of it. The Heart of Man is compared to the Ground, the Minister to the Seeds-man, and the Word to the Seed. Now, you know the Ground must be prepared before the Seed be cast in, otherwise thou canst not rationally expect a Crop. The Body must be prepared, and the humours gathered to an head, before Physick work kindly: what business of moment can be done without preparation? And can we think, in this business of so great concernment, it is sufficient to rush hand over head without consideration? Some preparation should be made before the Sabbath came, in setting thy Heart, as well as thy House in Order; the Command is, to remember the Sabbath, to keep it Holy: And when the day is come, there are some Duties required before thou rush into the Congregation; perform those Duties in thy Family, and in thy Closet that are required; beg of God a blessing upon the Ordinance, and upon the Minister, that he may speak a word in season to thy Soul, that it may meet with thy Corruption, and may strengthen thy Grace, and benefit thy Soul: how canst expect a Blessing, that dost not beg for it? This is one cause that many go away barren, because they came unprepared: Lay thy Heart

open

open before God; say, as *Samuel*; *speak, Lord, for thy Servant heareth.* In thy Prayer, open thy Soul to God; unlap thy Ears, and desire a Plaister: offer up thy Sin-sick Soul to this Physitian, that he may pour Oyl and Wine into thy Wounds; who knows but this may be the Time of Love, wherein God may say unto thy Soul, Live. Come with a resolution to deny thy self, thy Carnal wisdom, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to the will and Command of God: Come not with a Resolution to oppose God in any thing, though it be never so cross to flesh and blood, or to thy Carnal will, or Interest; or be never so opposite to thine own Natural Inclination or Appetite. Why should we come to know our Duty, if we will not do it? Or our sin, if we will not leave it? The word of God seldom works upon a fore-stalled affection. If thou knowest (and know thou mayst, if thou carefully observe it) what hath usually hindred thee in times past, from profiting by the Word; take heed of that for the time to come. Sometimes thou wilt find that it was Pride; thou sets up thy own will against God. Sometimes passion; this put thy Heart out of Frame for the Duty. Sometimes Worldlyness; this filled thy Heart with vain thoughts: Beware of these for the time to come. Especially beware of these sins which are most predominant in thy Soul, for this will spoil the Duty. Come with a strong Resolution to Obey God in every thing. When he forbids any sin, resolve to leave it; when he Commands any Duty, set about it; for to what end else dost thou hear, if it be only to know thy duty, and not to practice it; it will but procure thee the more stripes; but many are like to foolish

Women, mentioned by the Apostle, *ever Learing, and never come to the knowledge of the Truth.* And they are like *Balaam*, let God deny them never so oft, they will come again; fain they would have a dispensation to sin, and go to Heaven in a sinful way. But we must, with good Old *Ely*, say, *'Tis the Lord, let him do with me as he listeth.* Or like *Paul*, *Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?* Come also with a good stomach, then the Word would be savoury to thee; such a man will not strain courtesie, and carve all from himself, but greedily feed upon something. Now, he meets with such a man, saith one; now he hit such a one home: but what is this to thee? Is nothing there that thou canst eat? Get also some Acquaintance with the state of thine own Soul, how the matter stands between God and thee, or otherwise thou canst hardly divide the Word aright, and apply it: there are threatnings for obstinate sinners, and there are promises for the penitent; there is Milk for Babes, and strong meat for Men. How wilt know thy own portion, if thou know not the state of thine own Soul? If a sick man come to an Apothecary's shop, and may make choice of what Medicine he pleaseth, and yet neither know his Disease, nor what will Cure it, he may as well take, nay, 'tis more like that he will take that which is hurtful than that which is helpful. So a poor humbled sinner oft-times lays hold of the threatning, which belongs not to him, and the presumptuous man of the promise. And, lastly, when Death comes, say to the World, stand by (as *Abraham* to his Servants) I will come again.

5. *Direct.* If thou wouldest profit by the Word Preached, come to the Ordinances with an hungring,

gring, thirſting deſire after it; this is the Food of Life, and 'tis only the hungring Soul that is rightly qualified for it; *The full Soul loatheth the Honey-Comb*, *Prov.* 27.7. What ſhould a full ſtomack do at a Feaſt? Or a full Soul at a Sermon? How ſweet, how good, how precious was the Word to *David*, *Pſal.* 19. 10. And to *Job*, *better than his appointed Food*, Job 23. 12. And how pitifully doth *David* complain when he found the want, *Pſal.* 120. 5. And how earneſtly did he deſire it? And thirſt after it? *Pſal.* 42. 1, 2. As ever Chaſed Hart did for the Water-brooks; and hadſt thou ever taſted the ſweetneſs of the word, or rather of God in the word, I needed not words to have perſwaded thee to love it. But that I may ſet ſome edge upon thine Appetite, I ſhall deſire thee to conſider with me theſe few things: firſt, conſider whoſe word it is; is it not the word of that great God, that made Heaven and Earth, and all things therein contained? One that is able to make it good, both in the promiſes and threatnings: and is alſo Faithful, and will make it good? Heaven and Earth ſhall fail, rather than one tittle of his word be un-fulfilled; and ſhall we ſlight a Meſſage ſent from ſuch a one? Had a Potent Prince ſent a Meſſage, whether a promiſe, or threatning, how diligently ſhould we have read it? And how greatly ſhould we have been affected with it? with Joy, or Sorrow. Now, God ſends his Meſſengers with a Meſſage of peace, if we will accept it, if not, they are to denounce war; yea, and threaten everlaſting ruine, and deſtruction; and yet who regards it? Read the contents of his Letter, *Deut.* 28. throughout. Nay, the matter of this word of God is of greateſt concernment, were

were it but for trifles, it were no matter; but it is concerning Life and Death, nay, the everlasting Salvation or Damnation of Soul and Body, and therefore not to be slighted; they are Fools that Jest with such edged Tools. Here are Instructions drawn up how you may avoid Hell, and attain Heaven; how you may get rid of sin, and get out of the Slavery of Satan; how you may have a Remedy for your sin-sick Souls, and a Plaister for your Wounds; how you may get an Interest in Christ, and a Title to glory: In a word, how you may avoid Misery, and attain everlasting Happiness; and is not all this worth your serious consideration? Again, here is a Rich Legacy bequeathed to you by your Heavenly Father, even exceeding great and precious Promises, more worth than the World; and are not these worth the reading? At these Breasts of consolation thou mayst suck and be satisfied, for they can never be drawn dry; thou wilt never repent the pains thou takest this way. This Word also is excellent in it self, and therefore called the Word of Salvation, *Acts* 13. 26. as pointing out the only way to Salvation: the Word of Reconciliation, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. as holding out Christ the only Reconciliator: the Word of Life, *Phil.* 2. 16. as pointing out the only way to Life. Here also is contained our Evidence for Glory, and all we have to shew for Heaven; this tells us what Qualifications are necessary to Salvation: here we find a Redeemer, a Saviour, a Surety to discharge our Debts, and Redeem the Soul out of the Slavery of Satan; yea, out of the hands of Divine Justice: This is God's Love-Letter, wherein he makes Love to sinful Souls, and offers them Christ for

for a Husband, and Heaven with him for a joynture; here thou maiest find a cure for a wounded Conscience, and a sin sick Soul; when neither Men nor Means, neither Food nor Phisick can do thee good; here is a Plaister pointed out to draw out the Vennom of sin, and staunch the blood; yea, the way to Eternal Life is here chalked out, and shall we trifle in such things as these? many are the Promises made to those that walk after this Rule, *Rom.* 3. 12. and many are the threatnings against those that contemn it, *Deut.* 19. 20. *Prov.* 1. 23, 24. *Isa.* 6. 9, 10. 1 *Sam.* 2. 25. Methinks such considerations should breed an appetite to it.

6. *Direction*, If thou wouldest profit by the word, be sure to carry thy self well in the time of hearing; we must take heed how we hear, as well as what we hear; if thou shouldest make these preparations as before directed, yet all may be spoiled at last; Resort therefore timely to the Ordinance, 'tis more fit for thee to wait for God, than God waite for thee; late coming argues a weak stomack, hungry Persons will not strive to be last at a feast, and an hungry Soul will make haste where meat is to be had; and when thou art there behave thy self reverently, set thy self as in the presence of the great God; say as *Jacob*, *this is no other than the house of God, and the gate of Heaven*: and carry thy self as if God were present looking upon thee; many by their light behaviour manifest their little zeal: didst apprehend God present before the eye of thy Soul, it would keep thine eyes from sleeping, and thy heart from wandring; joyn with the Minister in every part of Gods worship; God is the God of order, and not

of

of confusion; a private Prayer is most suitable for a private place, and private duties as before should be performed in the Closet, *be more ready to hear, than to offer the sacrifice of Fools*, Eccles. 5. 1. When the Minister prayes joyn with him, and pray with Devotion; when he sings, sing with the understanding, when he preacheth, here with attention; attend not only to the words, but to the sence; and not only to the sence, but also to the Divine Obligation that lyes upon thee; draw out all thy strength in the performance of the duty; hear as if it were for thy Life, for thy Soul, for Eternity, as indeed it is, *Deut.* 32. 46, 47. *Set your hearts upon all the words which I testifie among you this day, which you shall command your Children to observe: for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life, and through this you shall prolong your daies*; and you must not only hear with attention, but with understanding also; for how can you profit by it, or what good will it do you, if you understand it not? and yet some Ministers (the more is the pity) seek to hide their meaning in a Cloud of words, and deliver their message either in an unknown tongue, or in unknown Notions; and 'tis the folly of some hearers, that delight in those Sermons they understand not, *the Mass bites not*, but what wise man will delight to gnaw bones, that may have flesh, *Paul*, had rather speak *five words in the Church to edification, than two thousand in an unknown tongue*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 19. and when thou dost understand it, prove it by the Scripture, and take it not upon trust; 'tis Christs counsel, *search the Scriptures*: and the Apostles, *try all things, and hold fast that which is good*: and the *Bereans* are commended for so doing, *Act.* 17. 11. and when you have found it to be wholesome

some meat, apply it to the heart; this is the summ of all, and without this it will do you little good: what good will Meat do if not eaten? or Phisick if not taken? or a Plaister if not applyed? do as an hungry man doth, lay hold on something to feed upon, when nice stomacks carve away all to others: now he meets with this man, or that man, but did he say nothing to thee? will another mans meat feed thee? or another mans Physick make thee well? close with it thy self, lay thy heart open to the Word, strive not against it, submit to it, indeavour not by subtil Distructions, cunning Evasions, false Glosses, partial Interpretations to evade the force of it, or blunt the edg, but with *David* when reproved, cry out *I am the man*; wrest not out of Gods hand: if any sin be reproved, reform it; if any duty prest, practice it; if the Minister teach thee any thing thou knowest not before, remember it, and bless God for it.

7. *Direction*, If thou wouldest profit by the word preached, demean thy self well then after hearing; 'tis not enough to give diligent attention, nay, to perform all the fore-going duties, for the most of the work lyes behind; when the Minister hath done, thy work begins; thou must call it to mind, ruminate upon it, do as the clean Beasts under the Law, chew the Cud; what ever slips out of thy memory will do thee little good, 'tis what thou remembrest, is most like to profit thee. Now to this end call to mind the Ministers Method, what was his Text, how divided, how explained, what observations he raised, how they were proved, by what Scriptures, by what reasons, how he applyed them, what marks or motives he gave under such Uses, *&c.* If he take not this method, which is exceeding good for the memory, yet observe at least,

what

what design he followed, what he driv'd at, what sin he reproved, what duty he prest, what grace he excited, and thus doing thou wilt gather up some gleanings of this Sermon; especially observing if he prest any duty thou neglectest, or reproved any sin thou livest in: if all the rest be forgotten, remember this, and what he taught thee that thou knewest not before; now when thou hast thus called these things to mind, meditate upon them: for as Meat cannot nourish, if not digested, no more will the word till by meditation, thou makest it thy own; meat is easily cast up when it lyes undigested in the stomack: so here when the Seed is sown and not covered by harrowing, the Fowls of the Air pick it up; and when the word is not covered by mediration, the Devil steals it away, *Mat.* 13. 4. 19. If any thing lye dark or difficult to thee, go to the Minister, or some understanding Christian to conferre of it, make known thy doubts, and this is a good way to get knowledg. The two Disciples that came to *Emaus*, inquired by the way and discourst: and 'tis thy duty to speak of the Word *in thy house, and as thou goest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up*, Deut. 6. 7. Oh what benefit might Christians get, were they careful of this Duty? the word of God would then dwell plentuously in them; this would make a deeper impression in the Heart, and would be a notable means to grow in knowledg. When thou hast passed thus far, than press it upon thy own heart, for what good will it do thee otherwise: examine thy self by the Marks and Characters, whether thou hast those gratious Qualifications, yea or no? whether thou art yet under the power of sin and Satan? and whether delivered? and be accordingly

accordingly affected: press home every reproof to thy self, and see how far guilty thou hast been; mourn for it, and reform; lay to heart every exhortation to duty, and let every motive strengthen thy Resolution, practice every direction, and make the best use of every passage for thy Souls good; and be sure to practice what is taught thee: otherwise thou maist hear all the days of thy life to little purpose, 'tis not the hearers of the Law, but the doers that are justified; he that knoweth his Masters will, and doth it not shall be beaten with many stripes; yea, 'tis not enough that thou practice it thy self, but thou must endeavour that others may do so also: to this end thou must instruct thy Family, thy Children, and thy Servants what in thee lyes, press them on also to obedience, this is a commanded duty, *Eph.* 6. 4. *Deut.* 4. 9. And it was the practice of the Saints in all Ages, *Deut.* 18. 19. *Prov.* 4. 4. and 31. 1. And because all thy services without Gods blessing are worth nothing: 'tis thy duty to go to God by prayer, to fasten these truths upon thy heart, which thou hast heard, and open the heart of thy Family; *Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but 'tis God must give the increase*: mark also from time to time how thou dost grow, or decrease. These Directions well used, through Gods blessing, will make thee profit by hearing.

CHAP. IV.

CHAP. IV.

Directions in Reading the Word.

THe next Duty I ſhall point out unto you, is the Reading the Scripture, and other good Books, which open and apply it; for this alſo is neceſſary, and very beneficial to the Soul: and though it be not ſufficient where the preaching of the word is to be had; yet, it is a neceſſary addition, and many a Soul hath had experience of much good received by it: this word is the Law of the Lord which is perfect converting the Soul; and many inſtances might be given of men converted by it; eſpecially where the word of God hath not ordinarily been preached. That it is a commanded duty, ſee *Deut.* 17. 19. where the King is commanded to take this book of the Law, and read therein all the daies of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord and keep his commandements; and if Kings themſelves are not exempted, notwithſtanding the multiplicity of their buſineſs, who then can plead exemption? yea, the Prieſts were to read it in the ears of all *Iſrael*, Deut. 31. 11. 'Tis the Apoſtles advice even to *Timothy, to give attendance to reading*, 1 Tim. 4. 13. and as 'tis a commanded duty, ſo 'tis the practice of the godly in all Ages; *Moſes* took the book of the Covenant, and read it in the ears of all the People, *Exod.* 24. 7. So did *Joſhua*, Chap. 8. 34, 35. So did

did *Josiah*, 2 Chron. 34, 35. and *Nehemiah* Chap. 8. 38. 18. and 9. 3. thus the *Enuch* Acts 8. 30. yea, there is a blessing pronounced upon it, *Rev.* 1. 3. *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this Prophecy*, and there is good reason for it, for as the Sun is to the World; such is the Word of God to a Christian, the very light of their lives, and the life of their Souls: but as it fares with the Sun, because it commonly riseth and sets, therefore it is not sufficiently heeded and admired; so 'tis with the Word, being common, 'tis not sufficiently prized; *Mannah* you know was at first admired, at the last loathed: so 'tis here, if God should send a Famine of the Word, it would be prized as it was when a Cart load of Hay was given for a few Chapters of the New Testament; the worth of it will be known in the want of it: as Health is best prized in Sickness, Peace in War, and Liberty in Bondage. Now for the Persons that ought to read, they are all that are in a Capacity; for if any were exempted they would be Kings, for the multiplicity of their business; but the book of God must be to them a *Vade mecum*, a constant Companion; Parents are to teach their Children in it, and under these two Relations, all Superiours and inferiours are contained, *Deut.* 6. 7. 'Tis the Devils practice and policy no doubt to keep Men from reading the Scriptures; Christ bids search the Scriptures, and how dare Papists and others speak the contrary? we are commanded to let the word of God dwell plentifully in us, and 'tis made a mark for a blessed man to meditate in Day and Night; here is the Mine out of which we must dig for knowledg, *Prov.* 2. 3, 4. Oh that men would spend that time in Reading, Medita-

ting, and conferring of the word of God; which they do in Vain, and idle Visits, needless Recreations, Carding, Diceing, Drinking, Drabbing, and such like; how much would it conduce to their Souls health? this makes more to the evening their accounts with God, and making preparation for the Soul, than the other will: I know 'tis objected, that the Scriptures are difficult to understand, and therefore dangerous to be meddled with, lest they be abused; this is the Objection of the Papists on the one side, it being their interest to keep men in ignorance: and the Sloathful on the other, *who will not Plough because of Winter*, Prov. 20. 4. but this should rather quicken our diligence, than serve for a discouragement; if difficult duties be neglected, we shall never reach Heaven, 'tis true some things are difficult, but the most necessary are plain and easie: here indeed a Lamb may wade, and an Elephant may swim, but the gains will countervail the loss and charge; here is a Lamp to light us, the dew of Heaven to refresh us; a sword to defend us, a key to open Christs will to us; flaggons of Wine, and Apples of Paradice; take therefore these Directions in thy Reading.

4. *Direction.* If thou wouldest Read the Word with profit, 'tis necessary that thou prepare thy heart for so solemn a duty; come not out of a huddle of business, with thy heart full of the World, to discourse with God; take not Gods word, any more than his Name, in vain: take it not prophanely into thy mouth, without due regard, or consideration, lest he turn thee away with a Curse, instead of a Blessing: 'tis a business of great concernment, even of Life and Death; yea, of the

the Eternal well or ill being of thy Soul; and therefore not to be ſlighted: beg leave therefore of God before thou meddle with it, yea, beg his bleſſing upon it, without which nothing can do us good for Soul or Body; the want of due preparation, cauſeth many to find the word ſo ineffectual: yea, find ſo little ſweetneſs in it. Again if thou wouldſt profit by it, hold on in a conſtant courſe of Reading; 'tis not reading by fits and ſtarts will ſerve turn; many are now off, now on; now they will, and then they will not; as the World gives them leave, or as the humour takes them: this is not ſufficient; but get a ſtrong Reſolution to hold on in a conſtant courſe of Reading what ever comes of it; break through all the difficulties that lye in the way, a little now and then, will do thee little good; without this Reſolution Satan will baffle thee, and lay ſome temptation in the way to hinder: the World will divert thee, and one buſineſs or other preſent it ſelf to be done at the ſame time: thy own corruption will oppoſe it, and thy deceitful heart make thee delay it; but this being the food of thy Soul, be not diverted from it any more, than thou wouldeſt be from thy Meat: but this is not ſufficient; thou muſt not only do the duty, but do it well: to this end get thy heart in order, get it cleanſed from diſtracting thoughts and cares, & freed from diſquieted motions, & perterbations: A full Veſſel can receive no more: and a heart full of the World hath no room for Heaven; ſay therefore to thy Worldly cares and thoughts when thou comeſt to this duty, as *Abraham* to his ſervants, when he went to Sacrifice; ſtay here and I will come to you again: ſet thy ſelf as in the preſence of the great God; apprehend him by the

eye of Faith, beholding thee; this will keep thy thoughts from roving, and thy imaginations from wandring, in his Service; and awe thy heart, and curb thy Affection. Bring with thee also a Spiritual Appetite, to the means of Grace; come with an empty stomack, or why dost thou seek after Food? An hungry man is most like to taste and relish those dainties; the Word was to *David* sweeter than Honey and the Honey-Comb; and to *Job*, better than his appointed Food: If there be Spiritual Life in the Soul, there will be an Appetite; for no Life can be preserved without food. Bring Faith also along with thee, which is the mouth of the Soul, and without this the Soul can receive no nourishment; *The Word which they heard profited them not, because it was not mixt with Faith in them that heard it*, Heb. 4. 2. Reading will do thee little good, if thou believe not the Truth of what thou Readest, or doubtest of the performance of the Promises, or Threatnings. Faith also will subdue Carnal Reason, and help thee out when thou art at a stand. But above all, seek help from above, from God; here are many difficulties too hard for thee to grapple with, which cannot be understood but by Divine assistance. *Paul* may Plant, and *Apollos* Water, but God gives the Increase: 'tis he that opened *Lydia*'s Heart, and must open thine, or the Word cannot do it; beg therefore his assistance, and come thus prepared to the Duty; this is the likeliest way to speed.

2. *Direct.* If thou wouldest profit by Reading of the Word, be sure to propound right ends to thy self; for the End Crowns the Action. Many read much, and profit little, because their Ends

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are bad; they undo themselves, and lose their labour by this means: Some Read for Custom, and for Fashion sake, and make reading the end of reading; and are like the silly Women, the Apostle speaks of, *always Learning, and never come to the knowledge of the Truth*; and so the work be done, matter it no more: Some Read to fill their Heads with knowledge, and their Brains with Notions, that they may thereby be able to discourse with applause, when yet they never suffer it to sink down, or soak into, or season the heart; but such speculative knowledge doth little good, yea, great hurt: It makes them sin with a Candle in their hands. And some Read to a worse end, that they may be able to oppose the Truth, and maintain Error, and pervert the good ways of God: thus the *Pharisees*, thus the *Jesuits*, and many Hereticks: But every one should, and a true Christian doth, in this duty as well as others, make God's glory in the Salvation of his own, and others Souls the mark he aims at; and regulates his Actions accordingly: And doubtless, from God he will receive his Reward. When others, as it was self they aimed at, so from self they must expect their wages. A Believer, he would know more, that he may obey better; he would know God better, that he might Love him more; and know God's will, that he might do his work; he would know his work as well as his wages; his Duties as well as his Priviledges: He reads the word of God, and those Books which open and apply it, that he may know Truth from Error; and follow the one, and fly the other; and may not be seduced by false Teachers, nor drawn aside from the Rule to the Right hand, or to the Left: He would know Light

from Darkneſs, and have the Scales of Ignorance fall from his Eyes; he would know good from evil, that he might follow the one, and avoid the other; he would be able to try the Spirits, whether they are of God or no; yea, to try all things, and hold faſt that which is good: he would know Vice from Virtue, and diſcern what is ſin, and what is duty; that he be not like thoſe that in Perſecuting the Saints, think they do God good Service: he would be acquainted with his own Heart, and know the ſtate of his own Soul, and whether his Evidences for Heaven be good or no: he obſerves what qualifications the Scripture requires, for Heaven; and then by Scripture-Light he would diſcern them in his own heart, and endeavours to Read his own Name in the Book of Life, and ſee what Intereſt he hath in Heaven, in Chriſt, and Glory; and what Evidences for Salvation, and what Signs of his Election, Vocation, Juſtification, and Adoption; and what right he hath to the Promiſes, which are his Father's Legacy: He would be able by the word to reprove Errors, and defend the Truth; yea, to reprove the works of Darkneſs, and repel all the fiery Darts of Satan, and be able to walk comfortable in the way to Heaven, and to fetch Conſolations out of God's word, to bear him up under the ſaddeſt Afflictions. They would be able to teach others in the way they ſhould walk, and Inſtruct them in the Holy Path, and reprove them when they err, and convince them when they go aſtray, and reduce them back that have wandered, and gone awry; and build them up that are already brought in: Theſe are ſome of the deſires of the godly in Reading the Scriptures, and not as the

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Butterflie, only to paint her wings; and these are the ends thou must aim at in thy Reading it, and then thou wilt Read it with Profit.

3. *Direct.* If thou wouldest profit by thy Reading the Scripture, and other good Books, Read with the greatest diligence, attention, care, and circumspection, that possibly thou canst; for all thou canst do is little enough: This is a Commanded Duty, and the work of God; and a Curse is threatned to them that do the work of the Lord negligently. Cursory Reading will do thee little good; and hence it is, that many read much, and profit little, because they read it carelesly; many read an idle Romance, or wanton Love-Song more attentively than the word of God. Read it, as if it were for thy Life, and the Life of thy Soul, and for Eternity, as indeed it is: Set thy Heart upon it, then art thou like to profit by it. Matters of Life and Death usually affect us; and shall not matters of Salvation, and Damnation affect us much more? Were but thy Life endangered by a heartless, careless Duty, who would be mindless, or careless, in the performance? Nay, how vigilant, diligent, careful, wouldest thou be? And is not the Life of the Soul much more worth? The word of God is of great Concernment; whether we consider the Author, or the Matter of it, it should put us on to the utmost diligence: The Author is the great God of Heaven, one that can put Life into both his Promises, and Threatnings; nay, will do it, for he is Faithful. And the word is an Epistle sent from Heaven, from this great God, and that for our Instruction, Admonition, Reproof, and Consolation, 1 *Cor.* 9. 10. & 10. 11. *Rom.* 15. 4. *Whatsoever things were written*

afore-time were written for our hearing, &c. This is God's Statute-Book, whereby he Rules the world, wherein are greater Rewards promiſed, to obedience, and greater Puniſhments threatned to the diſobedient, than any King upon Earth can annex to his Law, or can Execute, if he ſhould threaten them. There is therefore great Reaſon why we ſhould be more converſant in thoſe Laws, than the Laws of the Land, though theſe be neceſſary, becauſe the danger is greater. In the one we ſtand in danger of Life, or Liberty, or Confiſcation of Goods; in the other, of Eternal Damnation. It is ſaid of the Jews, that many of them could as readily Anſwer to any point in the Law, as they could to their own Names; and that they knew how many words, yea, ſyllables, yea, letters were in the whole Law. God grant their diligence riſe not up againſt us, to condemn us for our negligence. If a Father, or Maſter, or Ruler, or Prince, can Command Reverence from their Inferiors, ſurely God may much more from us. If we receive a Letter from a great Man with ſuch heedfulneſs, and Read it with ſuch diligence, and attention, and mark every paſſage with ſuch circumſpection, and care; ſurely much more care and diligence ſhould be uſed in this Epiſtle ſent from Heaven; from the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Nay, but the Contents thereof, the Matter therein contained requires diligence; 'tis Matter of greateſt Right, and greateſt Concernment; 'tis our Father's Will, and herein is Recorded the Legacy he hath left us. Now, who will neglect a Fathers Will, wherein an Inheritance is bequeathed? Here is the Rule we muſt live by, and the Law we muſt be Judged by; and

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are these Matters to be slighted? Here is all the Evidence we have for Heaven; and should this be dis-regarded? How careful are Men of their Evidences of their Lands? They will hardly part with them out of their own Hands; and yet alas! how seldom do many men take these Evidences into their hands; too Evident a Sign they have, but little hopes of good by it. Now, without the diligent perusal, how shall we come to the knowledge of them? Here are High Mysteries, in which we may easily be mistaken, and 'tis very dangerous to be mistaken: what need have we then of circumspection? These, and many other Considerations may put us on to diligence in Reading, Marking, and Observing the Scriptures.

4. *Direct.* Wouldest thou Profit by Reading? Then Read the Word with Judgment, Understanding, and Discretion. This is necessary in every duty; nay, in every Action. *A Wise Man*, saith *Solomon*, *Orders his affairs with discretion*; but it is required, especially in a work of so High a Nature, and of so deep concernment, as this is: many Read much, and profit little, because they understand little; they are like the *Eunuch*, to whom *Philip* said, *Understandest thou what thou Readest? He said, how can I, except some man should guide me?* Acts 8. 30, 31. Now, discretion should be used in regard of the Circumstances; of Time, and Place, and Order, and Method; for the want of discretion in these, a duty may be spoyled: Concerning Time, every thing, saith *Solomon*, is beautiful in it's season; all our Time must not be spent in this Duty, then others as necessary would be omitted: one duty must not justle out another, yet

yet ſometime muſt, and as much as can well be ſpared ſhould be reduced for it; yea, we ſhould rather redeem Time out of our ſleep, or recreations, than neglect it; and it ſhould be the moſt ſeaſonable time, a work is moſt excellent in it's ſeaſon. Morning, and Evening ſeem ordinarily the fitteſt Seaſons for Reading the Scriptures in the Family, for private Reading as occaſion ſerves; and for Place, that which is freeſt from diſtractions, and fitteſt for Edification, and Order; for private Reading, a private place, this doth moſt benefit a private Perſon, though that which is more publick Edifies more than one: A Method alſo is to be heeded in Reading the Scriptures, or any other Book; a diſorderly Action, or Duty ſeldom profits; Order, and Method are good helps to the Memory: Read the Scriptures throughout, in order, except ſome Chapters that are leſs to Edification; and ſo for other good Books, Read them throughout; he that Reads a Chapter here or there, at adventure; or, a leaf here, and another there, in another Book, profits little: and 'tis alſo neceſſary that thou underſtandeſt what thou readeſt; 'tis not ſo much the words and phraſes, as the ſenſe thou ſhouldeſt look after. The *Jews*, as I told you, had great care of the Scriptures; they counted the Words, Syllables, and Letters contained in the Law, and yet were Ignorant of the ſenſe, and miſt of the meaning. When thou readeſt a dark paſſage in the Scripture, reſt not till thou underſtand it: To this end Divines have given ſeveral Directions, ſuch as theſe: If thou be able, compare the Original and Tranſlation together, and, perhaps, this may reſolve thy doubt; every Language hath a peculiar Elegancy: and

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ſome words are of ſo hard a ſignification, that they cannot fully be expreſt in a Tranſlation. Now, knowing the Original will abundantly help, and the knowledge of Arts, and Sciences is alſo of great uſe; let the Enemies to Learning ſay what they will to the contrary. If this help thee not; look into the Context, obſerve the Circumſtances, and ſcope of the Place, and receive no Interpretation which Croſſes that. If this will not do, compare this place with others the like, and admit not ſuch a ſenſe as contradicts other Scriptures; eſpecially compare it with the analogy of Faith, thoſe plain Doctrinal concluſions, gathered out of other plain Scriptures, of which no doubt is made, and if it agree not with this, reject it; for Truth it ſelf cannot oppoſe it ſelf. We muſt reduce dark places to thoſe that are plain; and not force thoſe that are plain to the dark ones. If this help not, read ſome Learned Expoſition upon the place: If this fail, ſeek aſſiſtance from God; for, as the Sun cannot be ſeen but by it's own light; ſo the will of God cannot be known but by his own Spirit: he that Faithfully, and Carefully obſerves theſe Directions, may through Gods bleſſing come to know as much as is neceſſary.

5. *Direct.* If thou wouldeſt profit by the word thou readeſt, carefully obſerve the general ſcope of it, and what deſign God is aiming at, and what End he aims at, in it, and proſecute the ſame deſign, and aim at the ſame mark that he doth; for all Scripture is given for our Inſtruction. Now, if we heedfully mark the general ſcope of the Scripture, and the end which God drives on in the main, is to make himſelf known to the world, in his wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, to the end,

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that man may own him as their Lord, Owner, and Benefactor, and his Son Jesus Christ, for their Redeemer, and Saviour, that he might get himself Glory in their Salvation. Now, in thy Reading prosecute the same design that God doth, and aim at the same end which he doth; and this is the likeliest way to profit. The Scripture in general sets before thee the knowledge of God, and thy self; what God is, and what he hath done; what thou wast by Nature, what by the Fall, and what by thy Restauration: and also what God requires at thy hand. In the prosecution of this End, the Scripture handles those points which conduce hereunto. As first, in the work of Creation thou maist see God in his wisdom, and power, for none else could make the world of nothing; yea, every Creature will point out God to an understanding man; for it passeth the power of Men, or Angels, to make the least Fly, especially without pre-existent matter; nay, the Creatures do not only shew that there is a God, but also set forth the Attributes of God; as his Eternity, Wisdom, Power, Majesty, Goodness, and Perfection; these clearly shine forth in these his works. The least Creature, if you follow him home to his Original by Divine Meditation, will point out an Omnipotent Arm for his Creator: And when thou readest of his works of Providence, these also speak the same thing, and Teach the same Lesson. The wonderful works and Miracles he hath wrought for the preservation of his People. The Rule and Government which he hath set in the world; the preservation of his Church, and the frequent deliverance he hath given to his People Recorded in the Scripture, bespake to us his Power, Wisdom, Good-

Goodneſs and Truth. When thou readeſt of the Works of Redemption; this beſpeaks Chriſt the Lord, the Son of God, as he is witneſſed from Heaven, by Angels, by Saints, by Enemies, by Devils, all which gave Teſtimony to his Divinity; and that he was truly man is alſo evident by his Incarnation, Birth, Growth, Actions, Paſſions, Death and Burial, and Reſurrection *&c.* And that he is the true Meſſiah, the Saviour of the World, is clearly evident by Scripture light; here thou maiſt finde that all the Propheſies that went before of him, are clearly fulfilled in him, and no other: and ſuch Miracles wrought, and ſuch mighty Works done, and ſuch gratious Words ſpoken, that make it plainly appear, that he is indeed the Son of God the Saviour of the World. Again, when thou readeſt the Commands, Threatnings, Puniſhments, *&c.* Know theſe are to deterre thee from Sin, and to drive thee home to God thy Benefactor: and when thou readeſt the Promiſes, Invitations and Encouragements, theſe are to draw the nearer to him, therefore carefully obſerve what ever thou readeſt, and ſome way or other it will conduce to bring thee neerer to God: this is Gods end in writeing the Word, and ſhould be thy end in reading it.

6. *Direct.* Wouldſt thou profit by Reading? then meditate upon what thou readeſt, this is the way to make what thou readeſt thine own; it was this way that *David got more underſtanding than the Antient, and became wiſer than his Teachers, Pſal.* 119. 98, 99, 100. and 66. 11. Now Meditation is a ſtudious Art of the Mind, wherein a Man ſearcheth out ſome hidden truth, by the diſcourſe of Reaſon; and 'tis one of the moſt profi-

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table heart-enriching duties thou canst perform: this will fetch in Provision like a Bee, from every Herb, and Flower; yea, from every Weed, Thorn and Bramble will yield some Honey; this will store thy Heart with Treasure new and old, there is no Creature so barren, but will yield some Fruit; nor dead Tree, or hard Stone that is so barren, but it will yield some increase; no Creature but will yield a helping hand, no Fowl but will lend a Feather to mount the Soul aloft: A Christian skil'd in the Divine Art of Holy Meditation, can never want an Object fit to work upon: and if the Creatures thus furnish us, doubtless the Word of God cannot be fruitless: the Word of God of it self is Mysterious and Dark, at least some part of it, the Well is deep, and Meditation is the Bucket, hereby Divine Mysteries are drawn out, and the Water of Life pumpt; in cursory Reading many things pass by without regard, which by Meditation are fetcht back and made use of: This is not only a help to the understanding, but the Memory also: it leaves a deep impression upon it: What in cursory Reading is soon forgot, is prest hard upon and imprinted to the Memory by Meditation: hereby the Heart is stored with wholesome truths, which otherwise would be barren and empty of any thing that is good; and stored only with Vanity and Folly, this seasons it, and fills it with good things, which otherwise would be a Cage of unclean Birds, a very Sink of Sin and Filthiness; this seasons the thoughts, which produce Works and Actions. Meditation in the Word is that which *David* was excellent at, and every blessed Man should follow, *Psal.* 1. 2. and *Solomon* adviseth to, when he bid *search for Wisdome as for Silver, and*

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dig for it as for fine Gold, Prov. 24. this alſo hath a Promiſe of ſpeeding annexed, *Prov.* 2. 12. *&c.* This is the way which the faithful in all Ages have taken, and hereby it was they became famous: We finde *Peter* alone upon the Houſe top, a fit place for Meditation, you may finde *Iſaac* in the Fields meditating, *Gen.* 24. 63. *Act.* 10. 9. *Elijah* upon Mount *Carmel*, and *Daniel* by the Brook of *Ulai*, and how Sapleſs and Unſavery are all the Pleaſures in the World to a Man skill'd in Divine Meditation? The Phyloſophers that knew little of God, and leſs of the Scriptures, were ſo taken up with their Phyloſophical Notions and Speculations, that they oft-times mattered not their Meat, or their Drink, or their neceſſary recreations; *Archimedes* was ſo taken up with his Geometrical Notions, that when the City *Syracuſe* was taken, he was heedleſs; yea, when a Soldier ſtood ready to kill him, would not be drawn off, till Death it ſelf ended his Contemplations: if the Creature can bring ſuch ſatisfaction, what will the ſtudy of the Creator do? and the Meditation of Heaven and Glory? but alaſs, where ſhall we finde a wiſe Man? many read it not at all, others curſorily, few fruitfully, moſt are forgetful hearers, and forgetful readers; but Meditation would fix it in the Memory.

7. *Direct.* If thou wouldſt Read with profit? apply what thou readeſt to thy ſelf, and bring thy heart to the Rule, and thy Graces to this Touch-ſtone, and behold thy Face in this Glaſs of the Word; to what end is Meat given, but to be eaten? or Phyſick but to be taken? or a Plaiſter, but to be applyed? many read much, and profit little, becauſe they apply not what they read to themſelves: perhaps

haps they can apply it to others, and say, here is for such and such a man, when they neglect their own Portion. They are like the *Pharisees*, they binde heavy burthens, and grievous to be bourn, and lay them upon other mens shoulders, but they themselves will not touch them with one of their fingers: but why wilt thou deal so liberally to others, and deal so deceitfully with thy own Soul? doth it want nothing, or doth God speak nothing to thee, but only to others? In the things of the World thou art not so kinde, thou wouldest not be deceived by another, neither wouldest thou give away thy Estate with thy own hands to another; and why art thou so injurious to thy Soul, in things of a higher Nature? thou wilt not deprive thy belly of Food, nor thy back of Raiment; & must thy Soul only be deprived of both? An hungry man will not thus dispose of his meat, nor a covetuous man of his money; and this thy liberality shewes thou hast neither a stomack to these spiritual dainties, nor a desire after these spiritual and heavenly treasures. This word is of general use to all, every one hath his Portion: for as God hath made nothing in vain, so he hath spoke nothing in vain: when therefore thou readest his Precepts wherein he commands duty, and forbids sin; perswade thy self that God is now particularly speaking unto thee, and apply what is speaking to thy self, as if there was no other Man or Woman in the World besides thee; or as if God by an audible voice called thee out by Name, as he did *Samuel*, and gave thee these Commands to observe these duties to do: these sins to avoid: and let it deterre thee from sin, and quicken thee to duty; as if God himself had spoken to thee from

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Heaven: When a Miniſter reproves ſin, ſome guilty Conſciences ſay he means me; 'tis true, if thou be guilty the Miniſter doth mean thee, and God means thee; when the Word ſpeaks againſt Drunkards, Swearers, Lyars, then it means thee, if thou art guilty of thoſe ſins; When thou readeſt the pretious Promiſes which God hath made unto repugnant Sinners, aſſure thy ſelf, if thou be ſuch a one, theſe promiſes will be made good to thee; yea, as ſure as if thy Name were written by the finger of God in the Scripture, and annexed to them: yea, as if they were made to none but thee, and thoſe threatnings thou reapeſt in the word of God againſt unrepenting Sinners; aſſure thy ſelf if thou be in that condition, thou art as much concerned in them, and they will be as certainly made good upon thee, if thou continue in this condition, as if they had been only denounced againſt thee: and thoſe reproofs which thou readeſt for ſin, take them to thy ſelf, as ſpoken by God to thee, if thou be guilty of the ſin reproved; for aſſure thy ſelf God means thee in them; and thoſe Marks and Characters of Divine graces, and gracious Qualifications ſcattered through out the Scriptures, make uſe of to try thy ſelf by, & make uſe alſo of all the Admonitions God gives thee; and of all the examples thou findeſt of Divine vengeance, let them deterre thee from ſin; and all the examples of Holy Saints encourage thee in good; and generally of all ſorts of Directions, Inſtructions, *&c.* thus doing thou wilt gather good by thy Reading.

CHAP. V.

Directions for Meditation.

THE next Duty I ſhall ſpeak of, is Meditation; a neceſſary, though much neglected Duty. Yea, Chriſtians themſelves, that make Conſcience of other Duties, and are much in hearing, reading, and Prayer, yet are too backward; yea, unskill'd in the right performance of this duty. But did they know the benefit of it, and the incomes many receive by it, they would not neglect it: it brings much Advantage to a gracious Soul, and ſtores it with many Heavenly Truths, which thoſe that neglect it never attain: In this a man ingages all the powers of his Soul, and bends his mind to conſider, and muſe upon ſome Spiritual Object; for I ſpeak not of it here, as wicked men uſe it, to deviſe miſchief; but as a Chriſtian duty. Now, Meditation is either Occaſional, and Sudden; or elſe Solemn, and Set, for both are neceſſary, both are beneficial: The former is occaſioned by Objects occaſionally preſented, by the Providence of God; either to the Senſes, or brought to the Memory, and reſembles thoſe ſudden Ejaculations, ſuddenly occaſioned; only in the one a man ſpeaks to God, and in the other a man ſpeaks to his own Heart. Thus we ſee *David*, by beholding the Sun, Moon, and Stars, thoſe glorious Lamps of Heaven, he falls out into Admiration, of God's Love to poor man, in raiſing him above theſe, and making him but a little lower than the Angels, *Pſal.* 8. 1, 2, *&c.* Such occaſional

casional Objects were the grounds of many of Christs speeches, and Sermons: And a Christian by this means may learn something from every thing he either sees, or hears.

That Meditation that is set and solemn, is, when a man separates himself from other Imployments, and sequesters himself and thoughts from worldly affairs, to consider of some portion of Scripture, or some point of Divinity, or some work of Nature, for his own satisfaction, and his Souls good. That this is a Christians Duty few Christians will deny; that it is a beneficial duty, all that have tryed it in good earnest, will easily confess; *experto crede Roberto*. That 'tis too much neglected, we may acknowledge with shame and sorrow. *Joshua* was Commanded to Meditate in the Law of God day and night, *Josh.* 1. 8. This was *David's* practice, *Psal.* 119. 59. And this he makes the Character of a Godly and Blessed man, *Psal.* 1. 2, 3. It was *Isaac's* Custom; as also *Paul's* and *Peter's*, and many others. This is the way to digest the meat we eat; and can meat nourish, if not digested? This is the chewing of the Cud, when we ruminate upon what we hear, or see: Meat undigested in the stomack feeds Diseases, when 'tis digested it feeds the Body. What is the Reason so many good Sermons are lost amongst us? And so many gracious Providences pass un-observed, but for want of this? Doubtless, one Sermon well digested by Meditation would bring more nourishment to the Soul, and breed more good Blood, than now twenty do. By Meditation a man searches and ransacks the Soul, and finds out every dust-heap, every Corruption; and sees whether those Divine qualifications necessary to

Salvation be there or no; when others are ſtrangers at home, by this he gets light into the Underſtanding, heat into the Affection, and it puts Life into all his Duties. By this he comes to ſee the Vanity of the World, the emptineſs of the Creature, the vileneſs of Sin, the beauty of Holineſs, and the fulneſs of Chriſt: By this the Heart is taken off the World, and ſet upon Heaven; and ſees by the Eye of Faith thoſe things which are inviſible: By this he tramples upon ſublunary things, and fixes his Eyes upon things within the vail. By this *Stephen* ſaw God, and *Moſes* talked with God; and *Paul* was carried up into the third Heaven. By this Afflictions are made light, and the Croſs eaſie, and Chriſt's Yoak delightful: this makes a man chuſe Sufferings, rather than ſin; and pain rather than ſinful pleaſure: this helps the Soul to fly to Heaven, and hold Communion with Chriſt himſelf; and like the buſie Bee, to gather Honey from Flowers and Weeds; which to effect, take theſe following Directions.

1. *Direct.* Concerning Occaſional Meditation, though it be not what I chiefly intend; yet being of daily Uſe, I ſhall ſpeak ſomething of it at preſent. A Chriſtian that Trades for Heaven, may have much Goods brought home in this Ship: He may get Advantage by all he hears, or ſees, or obſerves; for there is nothing in God's Book, or in the Book of Nature, but will Inſtruct us in ſome neceſſary Leſſon, concerning God, or our ſelves; and mind us of ſomething that may conduce to our Advantage: And he that can make a good uſe of every thing he ſees, or hears; and pick ſome Spiritual Food, and refreſhing from it, muſt, doubtleſs, be a flouriſhing *Cedar* in the Houſe of God, and enjoy

joy Heaven upon Earth, and Spiritualize all the Creatures. How often in Scripture may we read that Christ by occasional occurrances, minds his Hearers of Spiritual things; from a Well of water he Instructs the Woman of *Samaria* concerning the water of Life. And by occasion of Bread, he minds them of the Bread of Life: and from a Sower and his Seed, shews that a bad Heart is the cause that the Word proves unfruitful; and many more such like. *David*, as before was hinted, beholding the Heavens, is raised up in his Meditation to God, himself, and his Love to Man, *Psal.* 8. 1,2,3, *&c.* *Solomon* sends the Sluggard to School to the Ant, or Pismire, that gathers in Summer, for Winter: And Christ sends those that are distrustful of their Fathers Providence, to observe the Fowls of the Air; how he feeds them: And the Grass of the Field, how he Cloaths it; and no doubt but a wise man may make a Sanctified use of all these. If a good wit can make a good use of every thing, much more a good Heart: Had we but this Art of Meditation, every thing would yield a suitable object. we have the whole world before us, the greatest want is of a good Heart to improve these Objects, that offer themselves to our view; the least Creature would be useful, if we were not wanting; every day that passeth over our Heads, may put us in mind of our latter end. Thy Bed may mind thee of thy latter end, and the time when thou must lye in the dust: and thy rising up may mind thee of thy Resurrection: The rising Sun may mind thee what a glorious day that will be, when Christ with his Saints and Angels shall appear at Judgment; each one shining as the Sun in his Lustre. When Night approaches

it may minde thee that thy daies are numbred, and that thou haſt now one fewer to ſpend, than thou hadſt in the Morning; and mind thee what account thou canſt give of it, and make thee conſider that the World cannot recal it: Every Pain and Grief, Ach and Trouble, yea, every gray Hair, may mind thee of thy Mortality: and how little beholding thou art to ſin, which brought all this into the World? When thou ſeeſt the Heavens adorned with thoſe beauty ſpots, the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, thou maiſt think, if the Porch be ſo glorious, what is the Pallace? if the Pavement be ſo beautiful, what is the Court? the Throne it ſelf? When thou conſidereſt their Beauty, Altitude, Magnitude, Selerity, and Influence, thou maiſt well admire the Creator; and with *David* cry out *Lord what is man, &c.* Who can but admire when he looks upon the Earth, the Huge and Maſſy Globe; the unweiley Creatures hanging in the midſt of the Air of nothing, diſtinguiſhed into Hills and Dales, and Woods, and Rivers, furniſhed with ſuch variety of Trees, and Graſs, and Herbs, and Flowers, and the numberleſs number of living Creatures, Birds, and Beaſts, and Fiſhes, and creeping things, and all provided for by the great Houſeholder! Who can behold the Rageing Sea kept within his Banks in the Ebbings and Flowings, and view the Streams and Fountains, the Springs and Rivers, and not cry out the finger of God? now among all theſe, there is not one Fly or Flea, not one Graſpile, or Leaf of a Tree, but yields matter of Meditation and Admiration: Ah! what a rich Soul will that be that gathers fruit from all theſe?

2. *Direct.* If thou wouldeſt perform thy duty well;

well; 'Tis neceſſary thou ſet upon it with due preparation. I ſpeak not now of occaſional Meditation, which is the duty of all men, and at all times; but of ſet and ſolemn Meditation, which is a duty at ſome times only, and when thou comeſt unto it, thou ſhouldſt come preparedly: no duty can be well performed without, much leſs this, ſo ſerious and ſolemn a duty: this requires the exerciſe of all the powers of the Soul, and the whole bent of the Minde; they muſt be wholly ſet upon ſome ſpecial Object, which for the time we make the matter of our Meditation: this duty is as the chewing of the Cud in the clean Beaſts, or as in digeſtion to the Body: for as digeſtion turns Food into Soil, and Blood, and Spirits, and Fleſh; So Meditation turns thee Truths received into Affections, Reſolutions, Acts, yea, into a Holy Life and Converſation: now the Preparations required, are either Internal or External; the Internal is chiefly the Heart, and the Underſtanding; the Heart is the chief Inſtrument in the Work; if the Inſtrument be in Tune, the Muſick will be good; if that be out it will be little worth; The ſucceſs of the Work depends much upon the frame of the Heart: if that be right God will vouchſafe to dwell there, and give in his Aſſiſtance in the duty, and without his aſſiſtance the duty will do us little good: There muſt be Grace in the Heart, as well as knowledg in the Brain, or the Work will not proſper in our Hands: get thy affections as much off from the World, and as reſolvedly ſet upon Chriſt as thou canſt, for Chriſt will admit of no Partner; and as a gracious Heart, ſo an Underſtanding Head would much forward the Work: 'tis a ſweet Conjunction where theſe

meet, but if severed, the former is most requisite: come with an empty Heart, and it will be filled; with an inlarged Heart, and it will be satisfied: this duty is enough to exercise the whole Man, were the Faculties a thousand times more capacious then they are; Angels themselves cannot dive into the bottom of many Misteries: lay by therefore all other Thoughts, Occasions, Business and Concernments whatsoever, and gather in thy whole strength, and set upon the duty; bring not a full Vessel that can hold no more; if a Vessel be full of Water, there is no room for Wine; if thy hands be full of Muck, thou canst hold no Money; if thy Heart be stuff'd with Trifles, it can hold no better Treasure; When thou mountest this Hill of Contemplation, be sure, with *Abraham*, leave all at the foot of the Hill: say, stand by Pleasures, stand by Friends, stand by World and Worldly things, I am going to Sacrifice, and will come again: When we come into our Princes presence, we leave our Muck behind us, and bring no unsuitable Company with us; much more when we come into Gods presence cast off all sin; out with the World and Worldly thoughts: yea, all other thoughts, though at other times good, which will any ways disturb thee; and dispose thy business so that thou maist not be hindred: and for external preparation, it consists in the Observation of some needful Circumstances, as Time, Place, *&c.* For Occasional Meditation all Times, and all Places are fit, when an opportunity is offered; but not so here: the Sabbath day is a fit time, when other duties are not on foot, but this is not enough, upon other daies experience will best instruct thee, when the Spirits are most lively, and active, and fit for the

the work, in the Morning, or in the Evening; the like I say for Place, where thou findest it most convenient at home, or abroad; in the House, or in the Field, the Place which is most suitable and freest from distraction is the fittest: *Isaac* walked into the Fields, Christ in the Garden, *Peter* on the top of the House; but I conceive ordinarily, for this set Meditation, that place which Christ appointed for private Prayer is suitable for this secret duty, *viz.* The Closet, with the door shut, *Mat.* 6. 46. In a word, when thou feelest a sweet gale of the Spirit assisting thee, lose not the oppertunity, strike while the Iron is hot, perhaps thou maist do more then in an hour, than at another time in a day.

3. *Direct.* Having thus prepared thy heart for the Work, and made choice of a fit time and place set upon it; set thy self seriously as in the presence of God: apprehend him taking notice of thee, how thou performest this duty, and this will keep thy heart from wandring, and thy thoughts from roveing; yea, before thou begin, put up some pithy fervent Petitions for Gods Assistance, and Direction, and that he will give thee his holy Spirit to the end; and that he will take possession of thy heart, and keep thy thoughts from wandring from the duty; for without Gods Assistance thou wilt but strive in thy own strength, and lose all thy labour: when thou hast made this entrance by Prayer, make choice of some profitable Subject to Meditate upon; all Meditation, though Set and Solemn, and serious, is not that I treat of. How seriously doth the Covetuous Man study how to grow rich? yea, perhaps how to deceive his Brother? How seri-

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ous is the Voluptious Man studying how to get Pleasure, or satisfie his lust? the Ambitious Man how to get honour? & the Envious Man how to do his Neighbour a Mischief? yea, the Holy Ghost saith he cannot sleep till it be done; but this is Devillish, and not Divine Meditation: but single out some choice, profitable Subject, and let thy thoughts run upon that: that which may winde up thy Affection neerer unto God, and which is well worth the time thou imployest about it: the Word of God, or Natures Garden will furnish thee with Flowers enow to gather Honey on: The Scripture will abundantly furnish thee to this end; no Verse but may be matter of Meditation: this is the Cannon whereby thou maist try good from bad, and truth from error, by this thou maist know what is Duty, what is Sin, what is true, and what is false; or thou maist take any Common place in Divinity for the Subject of thy Meditation: here thou maist finde a large Field to walk in, and many necessary, yea, fundamental truths may fall under consideration, but take heed of meddling with secret things which belong only to God, there is enough revealed for thy Salvation, and this should be sufficient for thy satisfaction: were it needful, I might lead thee by the hand, and shew thee matter sufficient to work upon, as the Nature and Attributes of God, but this is such a bottomless gulf, that the Angels themselves could never sound, or fathom; yet here we may sail by the Scripture Chard in safety: consider also the Works of God, the Decree, Creation and Providence: consider thy own Estate in the Creation, after the Fall, and in thy Restauration: consider Christ the Mediator, in his Nature, and Offices; his Incarnation, Birth, Life,

Doctoine,

Doctrine, Miracles, Death and Paſſion; his Reſurrection, Aſcention, and Interceſſion; and his coming at the laſt to Judgment: and here thou haſt matter enough to ſpend thy days about. Conſider alſo the Commands of God, and the Duties he requires at thy hands; and the promiſes he makes to the Obedient, and the threatnings to the Diſobedient. Conſider alſo the four laſt things; Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell; and by this thou ſeeſt there is work enough in Natures Garden: Alſo, there are a thouſand things well worthy thy conſideration; there is not a Weed in the Field, a Tree in thy Orchard, an Herb in thy Garden, a Beaſt in thy Paſture, a Fowl in the Air, or a Fiſh in the Sea, or River, but will Teach thee ſomething; and 'tis a barren Heart indeed that cannot draw a Meditation from the leaſt Gnat, or moſt deſpicable Worm that crawls under his Feet.

4. *Direct.* Having thus prepared matter, and pitcht upon ſome ſuitable Subject to Exerciſe thy thoughts and Meditations upon; proceed then to drive on thy intended deſign to a head; and to the end thou didſt propoſe. Now, this end ſhould be the enlightning of the Underſtanding, and the clearing it from Error, or Ignorance; and the quickning the Affections, and raiſing them to a higher pitch, and the bringing of the Will to a Reſolution. In Meditation, if rightly managed, the Soul Exerciſes two ſorts of Acts; the one direct, the other reflect: the firſt upon the Subject Meditated upon, the other upon the Soul it ſelf. By the firſt we find out the Rule, by the ſecond we apply our own Hearts to the Rule, and obſerve our deviation, and obliquity: the firſt enlightens the Underſtanding, and the other quickens the Affections;

Affections; by the first we come to know what is true, what is false; what is good, what is bad; what is sin, what is duty; and consequently, what is to be chosen, and what refused: By the other we apply our Actions to this Rule, and try whether we have walked according to it; wherein we have gone astray, and which way to return. Now, as there are two sorts of Acts, so there is a different way for the Souls Acting, for the attaining of those several ends. For the first of these, some have pitcht upon this course, which though all men are not able to follow, yet I shall set down for the use of those that can. And that is to have recourse to those places that Natural, and Artificial Reason affords us, which may help the Invention, and ready the Memory, and much facilitate the Work; I mean, those Logical places following: As first, to consider the thing about which we Meditate, what it is; and therefore as ability doth serve, consider it in the definition, or the description of it; but stand not over-long, or over-nicely upon this, or any of those that follow, lest what you get one way may be lost another; what you get in the Understanding, be lost in the Affections. And when thou hast found out the Nature of the thing, consider it also in the distribution of it, if it be a Subject capable of the sorts, kinds, and parts of it; this will give room to thy thoughts, and thy proceeding will be more distinct: Consider it also in the causes; the Efficient, Material, Formal, and Final Cause: The Efficient Cause is that by whose Virtue, Force, or Efficacy a thing is, The Material Cause is *ex qua res est*, of what matter a thing is made; the Form is whereby a thing is, that which

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it is, and the end is the Cauſe for whoſe ſake, or for what purpoſe a thing is. Conſider alſo if the Subject will admit, the Fruits and Effects; for theſe are uſeful, and helpful in the work, and are alſo pertinent to our buſineſs. Conſider alſo the Subject wherein it is, and about which 'tis occupied; as alſo of it's Properties, and Qualities; either adhering to it, or inhering in it; together with the oppoſite and contrary; this alſo is uſeful: alſo the comparats, and deſperats; what it is like, and what it's unlike; fit ſimilitudes, much Illuſtrate, and give great light to the Underſtanding: Teſtimony alſo is to be regarded, but Noble Command aſſent like thoſe of Scripture; Holy mens Teſtimony is of good uſe, but Divine Authority is all in all. Or if you think this way too intricate, you may take ſuch a Method as is moſt Familiar to explain the Subject you treat of; raiſe thy Obſervations, clear the Doctrine from difficultics, and doubts; prove it both by Scripture and Reaſon, and then make uſe of it according to the Nature of the Subject; let it inform thee in the uſeful conſectaries, and concluſions, that may thence follow; let it Inſtruct thee in the duties it reaches forth; let it be for Examination, how thou haſt carried thy ſelf, or whether thou haſt the required qualifications for reproof: if thou haſt gone aſtray; for incouragement: if thou haſt done thy duty; for caution, for the time to come; and preſs all home upon thy heart: Such a courſe is like to furniſh thee with ſutable matter for thy Souls good.

5. *Direct.* When thou haſt thus far proceeded, and by Meditation haſt informed thy ſelf of what is neceſſary in the preſent point; and haſt found out,

out, by the uſe of Reaſon, and Scripture-Light, what is Truth, and what is Error; what is ſin, and what is Duty; what thou oughteſt to do, and what to avoid. Thy next work is to preſs this upon thine own Head, and compare thy Head and Actions with the Rule, and try wherein thou haſt gone right, and wherein thou haſt gone aſtray: for if thou do not thus reflect back upon thy own Heart, and Life, the duty will do thee little good. If thou only ſtudy to find out Truth from Error; or what is ſin, and what is duty, without Regulating thy Life and Actions accordingly; and endeavour to fill thy Head with Notional knowledge, it will but aggravate thy ſin, and thou wilt ſin with a Candle in thy hand. But when by this Impartial Tryal, thou findeſt out wherein thou haſt ſinned, and come ſhort of thy duty, which the Law of God requires at thy hand; or wanteſt thoſe required qualifications neceſſary to Salvation: Preſs thoſe things home upon thy heart, till they make ſome Impreſſions there; yea, till they ſtir up the Affections, and work upon the Will to a through Reſolution of Reformation for the time to come. This is the Life of Meditation, and without this 'tis little worth. When thou findeſt wherein thou haſt come ſhort, to come to a Reſolution, to make more haſt: and where thou haſt gone aſtray, to return; and where thou haſt ſinned, to Reform: Preſs on thy Meditation till thou findeſt ſome Life in it, according to the Nature of the thing: if it be good, till thou find a ſweetneſs in it; if bad, till it appear odious. If it appear to be good by Scripture-light, and rectified Reaſon, then the affection of Love muſt needs be ſtirring, for good is it's object, and evil as evil cannot be loved.

loved. When it appears to be bad, the affection of Hatred will close with it as it's object, for the Understanding when 'tis informed, in the Nature of the thing according to it's apprehensions, and conclusions sends down report unto the Heart, where the affections dwell; and every affection closes with it's proper Object: Love with good, and Hatred with evil. Good things difficult to be obtained, stir up desire; evil likely to come stir up fear, *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* This will make thee bewail thy miserable Condition, when thou canst not enjoy the thing desired, yet long, and hunger, and pant after it, as *David* did for the enjoyment of God, *Psal.* 42. 1. He that tasts the sweetness of it, and cannot get it, must needs earnestly long after it. Whether it be the removing the Judgment, or the Sin that causeth it; or whether it be the attaining the gifts and graces, which we want, it will work in us a Resolution to our power to endeavour the obtaining of the thing we want: and when we find it is not in our own power, this will put us on to a Resolution to go to God, in whose power it is to dispose of these things; to confess our wants and failings, and imperfections, and dis-ability; and, like a Beggar, unlap our sores, to move pity, and to Petition him to grant us those things which we so earnestly desire; and rest confident we shall enjoy the Mercy desired; the ground of which confidence is the promise of God, who bids us *ask, and we shall have; seek, and we shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to us.* And the Experience of the Saints in all Ages, who have thus prevailed. And this also will work in us a strong Resolution

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to use all Lawful means, and all possible endeavours, for the attaining of our desires. 'Tis a faint wish indeed, that is not seconded with endeavour. This will make us be careful of our selves for the future, when we consider our miscarriages for the time past; this was the result of *David's* Meditation, *Psal.* 119. 59. *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies*, Psal. 42. 5. 11. And without this our labour is lost; 'tis not enough for a Traveller to know he is out of the way, but he must return into it.

6. *Direct.* In Meditation beware of those things which usually prove hinderance in the Duty; for whosoever shall make Trial of it, shall find enough to do to manage it well, and perform it well as it ought to be. The Devil, that knows how much he is disadvantaged by it, will never suffer thee to do it without opposition: he lays many snares to intangle the Heart, and render it unable, and unfit for the work: If he can divert the Heart, which is the most necessary Instrument in the work, he is well enough; hence often he steals it away: and as in Prayer, when we should seek God, we had need to seek our own hearts. So also in Meditation; for the Heart many times, like a sloathful Servant, gives us the slip, when there is most work to do: Sometimes the Devil fills the Heart with distracting cares, and thoughts of the world, which commonly croud in upon us, when they should stand back, and give place; this is an hindrance in all duties, but especially in this; wherein the whole man is required, and the Heart cannot be spared: here we should have an heart in Heaven, but how can it mount up, when her wings are clipt? And her feet fetter'd, and clog'd? How

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can our thoughts ſoar aloft, when they cling faſt to the Earth? How unſtable to the duty is it when we come with a Fancy of ſome Earthly Happineſs? Or hug ſome thriving Project in our Brain? And ſolace our ſelves with ſome Worldly Advantage, while we pretend to have our Converſation in Heaven, and our Communion with God. The Scripture tells us, *The Friendſhip of the World is Enmity to God*; *and he that is a Friend to the World, is an Enemy to God*, James 4. 4. The Apoſtle adviſeth, *not to Love the World, nor the things of the World*; *and if we Love the World, the Love of the Father is not in us*, 1 John 2. 15. Beware therefore of this ſnare, entertain no Diſcourſe with the World till thou haſt finiſhed the work that lies before thee. Do, as *Moſes*, leave thy ſhooes behind thee, when thou comeſt into God's preſence, *Exod.* 3. 5. Or, as *Abraham*, all at the foot of the Hill: when thou aſcendeſt this Mount of contemplations, ſay, ſtand by Profit, ſtand by Pleaſure, ſtand by World, till I come again; and though theſe knock at the Door, open it not; come not with a Love or liking to any known ſin, this is a notable hinderance in this caſe, and will ſpoil thy Duty; this dimmeth the eye of the mind, that it cannot ſee Spiritual things: As it hinders Prayer, ſo it hinders Meditation alſo, *Pſal.* 66. 18. *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, God will not hear my prayer*, neither will he ſucceed thy Meditation: Thoſe that will preſerve precious Liquors, put them into clean Veſſels; and thoſe that will ſtore up clean, and Holy Thoughts, muſt put them into pure Hearts: what Communion hath Light with Darkneſs, or what Fellowſhip hath *Chriſt* with *Belial*? If thou uſe violence to thy

Conscience, thou art a stranger to an Heavenly Life. Laziness also is another hinderance to this work, when men are loath to take pains with their own Hearts; and Meditation cannot be managed well without much pains, there is scarce any thing hinders knowing men more than this; when men cannot away with diligence, they either omit, or slubber over the Duty; and as good never a whit, as never the better: few men are willing to sequester their thoughts, and affections from the World, and to be intent upon the Duty, and Exercise their Graces in their Order, or their Affections upon their proper Objects, and hold them there till they find success. The Heart of man will prove false, and Treacherous, and is hardly brought unto, or kept upon the Duty; it will find some starting hole or other, and frame some excuse to be gone, if we use not violence to force it: How lazily will it demean it self? How ready will it be to depart before the work be done, and make some Vagaries, or entertain the thoughts of the World, or divert it self to some more pleasing Objects; and if thou look not about thee, will pass away the time idly, and give over before the work be brought to any perfection: but thou must deal by thy Heart, as thou wouldst do by a sleighty Servant; perswade, command, threaten, and chastise, force it into the presence of God, and let it not stir till the work be done.

7. *Direct.* When thou hast thus wound up thy heart by Meditation to the highest pin, and work'd thy Affections into a heat, and brought thy work into a good posture, and gathered Observations for thy use; Take heed of letting thy heart flag too suddenly, or thy Affections cool over-hastily; keep

keep up that Spiritual Life, and vigour as long as thou canst; Live in the strength of that meat, if possible, as long as *Elijah* did, forty days; yea, labour to be the better for it all thy Life. 'Tis not safe in a great heat, to cool too hastily: he that climbs high should descend by leisure. Hast thou met with God in the Duty? Stir not thy Foot before thou hast given him thanks. We are apt to be sensible of our pressing wants, and our desires are let out for a supply in our needs; God hears of us then, we cry, arise, and save us: but a gracious Heart should be as sensible of Mercies, as of Miseries; and be as ready to render praise for the one, as to put up Prayers for the removal of the other: But most men are like the Lepers; of ten, that are healed, but one gives thanks. And 'tis thy Duty also to Treasure up that knowledge which thou hast gained by this Duty; store up in thy Book or Memory the Conclusions thou hast gathered: Hast by Reason and Scripture found, that sin is bitter? Lay up this as a certain Truth, for hereafter. Hast thou found that Grace is Lovely, and Holiness amiable? Remember this also, lay up these Resolves, that they may stand thee in steed in a day of Temptation; that if ever Satan, the World, or thy own deceitful Heart should hereafter perswade thee to love sin, or disown Holiness, thou mayst reply, nay, but at such a time, in such a place, I found by such Scriptures, and such Arguments, that sin is filthy, and Holiness Lovely; in what false glass soever you now represent them to us. Nay, not only so, but devote thy self wholly unto God, and Resolve that thou wilt Live according to those Conclusions, thou hast raised, and those Truths thou hast found

out; and that thou ſubmit thy ſelf to his Will, ſo far as he ſhall reveal it unto thee. Without this what benefit canſt expect from the Duty? When thou haſt found out the Duty, and by undeniable Arguments canſt prove it to be thy Duty, and yet wilt not do it, thou wilt be beaten with the more ſtripes. If by the force of Reaſon, and Evidence of Scripture, thou find out that the way of ſin is to be forſaken, and the Duties of Holineſs to be performed; and yet thou forſake Holineſs, and chuſe ſin, what Excuſe canſt thou plead? Thou wilt but ſin with a Candle in thy hand: but if upon theſe Conſiderations, thou ſet thy ſelf to hate ſin, as the greateſt evil; and walk in the path which is called Holy, in ſincerity; then ſhalt thou reap Fruit by thy Meditation. If thou find upon Conſideration, that God is the chiefeſt good, and Love him as the chiefeſt good, happy wilt thou be: If thou find the Devil to be the worſt Maſter, and break out of his Priſon, and reſolve thou wilt never give him one more Act of willing Obedience, 'tis well: or, if thou find in the reach of thy Heart, that thy Grace is not true, and thereupon thou reſolveſt never to give thy Heart any reſt, till thy Relation be changed; and God be thy Father, and Chriſt thy Husband, 'tis well: Or, if in the ſearch thou findeſt Evidences of true Grace, Record them; they will be of uſe in a day of deſertion, and help againſt the Devils fiery Darts: The Reſult of *David's* Meditation was to return home to God, *Pſal.* 119. 59. So it ſhould of ours, if it make us not more in Love with God, and Holineſs, and more to hate ſin, and wickedneſs, it doth us no good; if it ſtrengthen not our Graces, or weaken not our Corruption, we

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loſe our Labour. In a word, conclude the whole Duty; either with Prayer to God for a Bleſſing, or if it may be convenient, with ſome Verſes of a Pſalm that is ſuitable.

CHAP. VI.

Directions in Prayer.

THE next Duty I ſhall ſpeak unto is Prayer; which is not only Work, but Wages; not only a Duty, but a Priviledge. Now, Prayer is an Offering up our deſires unto God, in the Name of Chriſt, by the aſſiſtance of the Spirit, with Confeſſion of ſin, and thankful acknowledgment of God's Mercies received; *Pſal.* 92. 8. *John* 18. 23. *Rom.* 8. 26. *Pſal.* 36. 5, 6. *Dan.* 9. 4. *Phil.* 4. 6. For the kinds of it you may take notice, there is Confeſſion, when we acknowledge our ſins to God: There is Petition, when we beg of God thoſe things neceſſary for Soul, or Body, for this Life, or that to come: There is Deprecation, when we beſeech God to turn away the evils felt, or feared; from our ſelves, or others: There is Interceſſion, when we pray for others alſo; and there is Thankſgiving, when we thankfully acknowledge the Mercies received. Now, Prayer is either publick in the Congregation, or private in the Family, or ſecret in the Cloſet: each of theſe ſhould have their time; each hath a Promiſe, and we may find Precepts for, and Example of them. That Prayer is a Duty, is acknowledged

by moſt, and denyed by few, till of late Years, wherein ſome have argued themſelves above Ordinances; but the Scripture owns no ſuch thing, we have the Command of God for it, which is Authority ſufficient, and the only Rule to walk by: 'Tis a Divine Command that makes it Duty; read theſe following Scriptures, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 17. *Pray without ceaſing.* *Col.* 4. 2. *Continue in Prayer, and watch in the ſame with thanksgiving.* *Rom.* 12. 12. *Continue inſtant in prayer.* *Pſal.* 59. 15. *Call upon me in the day of Trouble,* &c. I might inſtance in many Promiſes made to it, and many threatnings to thoſe that neglect it, and ſhew you the Examples of the beſt of Saints; yea, of Chriſt himſelf, that ſpent whole nights in Prayer: All which ſufficiently prove that it is a Duty; and therefore let us ſet upon it with all alacrity: many are the encouragements unto this Duty; ſome from God, ſome from Prayer it ſelf, and ſome from our own Neceſſities: From God his Promiſes to hear and help, may encourage us, *Pſal.* 50. 15. and many other places: his Attributes, this aſſures us he is able to help, and faithful in his Promiſes, and will do it. The Relation that is between God and a Believer gives him hopes; he is their Father, Chriſt their Elder Brother, their Head and Husband; yea, their Redeemer, and Interceſſor. The Experiences they have Recorded of all Ages: The Returns of Prayer, is no ſmall encouragement, which ſhews the Efficacy and Force of it, and how prevalent it hath been with God; and therefore one calls it the almoſt, if not altogether Omnipotent Grace of Prayer. I might give you a taſte of it thus. It hath changed the courſe of Nature; ſtopped the Sun in the Firmament, *Joſh.* 10. 12.

and

and brought it back ten degrees, 2 *Kings* 20. 11. Quenched the Rage of the Fire, *Dan.* 3. 27. Stopped the Mouths of Lyons, *Dan.* 6. 22. Divided the Red Sea, that *Israel* passed through, *Exod.* 14. 21. It hath prevailed over great Armies, and Potent Princes; as over *Pharaoh*, which it overwhelmed in the Sea, *Exod.* 14. 21. Over *Amalek*, *Exod.* 17. 12. Over *Sennacherib*, 2 *Kings* 19. 32. It hath with-held Rain from the Earth, for a long time, and after procured it, *James* 5. 17, 18. It hath brought Angels from Heaven, for the help of man; thus to *Daniel*, *Chap.* 9. 21. For *Hezekiahs* help, 2 *Kings* 19. 35. where an Angel slew in one Night, in the Camp of *Sennacherib*, a hundred forty and five thousand: And to *Elisha*, 2 *Kings* 6. 17. where the Mountain was full of Horses and Chariots of Fire about *Elisha*. It hath brought Fire from Heaven to consume the Enemies, 2 *Kin.* 1. 10. 12. It hath procured Bears to devour those Children that mocked the Prophet, 2 *Kings* 2. 24. It is the way to cast out Devils, *Mat.* 17. 21. and to work strange deliverances; as *Jonah* out of the Whales belly, *Jonah* 2. 10. *Peter* out of Prison, *Acts* 12. 5, *&c.* By this the Widdows Oyl was increased, 2 *King.* 4. 3. And Miracles might be wrought, *Mark* 11. 23. This is the way to recover the Sick, *James* 5. 15. To divert Judgments felt, or feared; thus *Moses* oft stood in the gap; This is the way to procure pardon of Sin, *Luke* 18. 13. To avoid the Temptations of Satan, *Mat.* 26 41. To have deliverance out of Troubles, *Psal.* 50. 15. To procure the Spirit of God, *Luke* 12. 13. To get Wisdom, *James* 1. 5. Who now would not set upon such a Duty? Now, to perform this Duty well, take these Directions.

1. *Direct.* There are several Qualifications requisite to every one that would rightly perform this Duty of Prayer, in an acceptable manner, without which a Blessing cannot be expected; for though Christ bids *ask, and we shall have; seek, and we shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to us.* Yet St. *James* tells us, we ask, and have not, because we ask amiss. It is necessary, in the first place, that thou be a Child of God, and have the work of Grace wrought upon thy Heart, or otherwise thou hast no assurance of being heard: The blind man, *John* 9. 31. could say, God heareth not Sinners. I know 'tis the Duty of others to pray; and the Apostle incourageth *Simon Magus* to the Duty, if, perhaps, the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven: But, till the Heart be brought over to God, we have no assurance that God will hear us: the Sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to God; till then, we cannot comfortably call God Father, nor come with boldness to the Throne of Grace; neither will Christ Mediate, or Intercede for us, while we remain his Enemies; neither will the Spirit of God assist us in the Duty, *Rom.* 8. 15. It is in Christ, and through Faith, that we have boldness and access with Confidence to God, *Eph.* 3 12. 'Tis necessary also, that we hate sin, if we come to God; for he is a devouring Fire to his Enemies, and will not be reconciled to those that are reconciled to Sin: How can we heartily pray against Sin, and for Holiness, if we love Sin, and hate Holiness? As all unconverted Sinners do. This is dissembling with God, when the Heart is not with him; *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart,* saith *David, God will not hear my Prayers,* Psal. 66. 18. Yea, God, who

who is Holineſs it ſelf, requires Holineſs in all thoſe that draw near to him; and he being a Spirit, will be Worſhipped in Spirit and in Truth: *Without Holineſs no man ſhall ever ſee God with Comfort*, Heb. 12. 14. Knowledge alſo is requiſite, for God cannot abide the Blind, and the Lame in Sacrifice; without this the mind cannot be good, nor the Service acceptable: without this a man knows not what to pray for, or what to pray againſt; what to ſeek, or what to ſhun; what is ſin, or what is Duty; what he wants, or what he hath; and what blind worſhip is he like to offer, he can never Pray as he ought. Self-denial alſo is neceſſary; he ſhould in all things ſubject his will to the will of God. A notable Example we have in *Chriſt* himſelf, whoſe Meat and Drink it was to do his Fathers Will. So when he had prayed that that bitter Cup might paſs from him; yet adds, not my Will, but thine be done: and thus he hath taught us to pray, *Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.* Faith alſo is required; for if thoſe ſhafts of Prayer, are not headed by Faith, they will never reach Heaven; this is the Condition required, whatſoever you ask believingly, you ſhall receive, *and without Faith 'tis impoſſible to pleaſe God*, Heb. 11. 6. Nay, further, Patience is alſo required; we muſt wait for an Anſwer, not like thoſe ſhort-winded *Bethulians*, that ſet God a time, and will wait no longer: but refer all to his Will, who beſt knows his own time; yea, the beſt time, and fitteſt Seaſon. He ought alſo to be an Humble man; for *God reſiſteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble*: He that hath not low ſelf-denying thoughts of himſelf, God will have low thoughts of his Service; he fills the hungry with

with good things, but the Rich he ſends empty away. He muſt alſo beg for the power and aſſiſtance of the Spirit, *Rom.* 8. 26. God knows the voice of his Spirit: Come not in thy own ſtrength. Thou muſt alſo be painful, and Laborious; not only pray for Mercies, but endeavour for them; a few faint wiſhes will not ſerve turn: Sin muſt be fought againſt, as well as pray'd againſt: endeavours muſt be uſed.

2. *Direct.* Before thou come to this Duty of Prayer, prepare thy Heart to meet the Lord thy God, in ſo ſolemn a Duty. Wert thou but to meet ſome Prince, or Noble Man, thou wouldſt make ſome Preparation; much more ſhouldſt thou when thou art to meet the great God, one that knows the Secrets of thy Heart, and thy Ends and Motives in the Duty. What buſineſs of Concernment is there, but needs ſome preparation? Much more, when the Soul is ſo deeply concerned in it. Examine therefore what Relation thou ſtandeſt in to God; whether he be a Friend, or an Enemy. Who can come with boldneſs to him, that hath offended him, and is not Reconciled? If thou haſt not a Mediator to Intercede for thee, and a Surety to undertake thy Debt, how dareſt thou approach to the Creditor, to whom thou oweſt ten thouſand Talents, and canſt not pay a Farthing? How dar'ſt approach this Conſuming Fire, that art but Chaff, and Stubble? And what hopes haſt of ſpeeding, if thou be not within the Covenant? The promiſe belongs not to thee. But when thou canſt find an Intereſt in God, and in the Covenant, and in Chriſt; canſt call God Father, yet ruſh not rudely into his Preſence, but ſtudy well what things he hath promiſed; for thoſe thou maiſt boldly

boldly ask: Heaven and Earth shall pass, but his Word shall not pass, till it be fulfilled. But if thou ask amiss, that is, what he never promised, no wonder if thou receive it not; acquaint thy self well with the Attributes of God; his Power, Goodness, Justice, and Truth, *&c.* This will be an Excellent Foundation for thy Faith. And when thou art come before him, set thy self as in his Presence, and let thy Heart be affected with awful Reverence of him, who is the Searcher of the Heart, and Tryer of the Reins. There's many that come to him in prayer, and little consider with whom they have to do. Come also with a full purpose, and Resolution, (or else never come) to leave, and forsake all those sins thou shalt confess; *For if thou regard Iniquity in thy Heart, God will not hear thy Prayer,* Psal. 66. 18. 'Tis a vain thing to think to get pardon for those sins thou wilt not leave; or a dispensation to Sin. Meditate before hand of the Number, Nature, and Quality of thy Sins: Of the Purity of God's Law, the Justice of God, his Threatnings against Sin, and Sinners, and the punishments he hath brought upon the World for sin; the little Good that Sin hath done thee, and the great hurt, *&c.* These Considerations may work in thee a loathing of sin, when thou seest that it is the cause of all thy Miseries, then wilt thou put up real desires to have it Mortified; and till then thou wilt but dally with God. Study well before-hand what are thy wants, which thou wouldst have supplyed by God. Let it be thy daily work to think what Sin, and Corruption is strong in thee, and what Grace is weak or wanting, and what thou wouldst beg at God's hands; and have not thy Errand to seek, when

when thou ſhouldſt do it. Study well alſo what Mercies thou haſt received, and forget not to render to God the Tribute of Praiſe: Thankfulneſs for one Mercy, is a real Petition for another. Many, like the *Lepers*, will come in a Petition for Mercies they want, but few in Thankſgiving for Mercies received: Moſt men are like the Swine under the Tree, they eat the Crabs, or Acorns, but look not up from whence they come: And where as 'tis a Commanded Duty to Pray one for another, 'tis neceſſary that we ſympathize one with another. Mourn with thoſe that Mourn, and Rejoyce with them that Rejoyce: It was *Nehemiah's* practice (and he ſhould herein be our Preſident) when all went well with him in his own particular, the Afflictions of the Church could wring Tears from his Eyes, *Nehem.* 1.4. And if any jarr be between thee and another, be Reconciled, this is Chriſt's Counſel, *Mat.* 5.23. *Mark* 11.26. Come thus prepared, and there is great hopes of ſpeeding.

3. *Direct.* Wouldſt thou put up a prevailing Prayer? See that thou make it to God alone, and not to Saints, or Angels, or any Creature whatſoever. This is that Homage which he hath reſerved to himſelf, and that Honour that he will not give to another. Many are the Commands which are in Scripture for this Duty, *Pſal.* 50.15. *Call upon me in the day of Trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt Glorifie me.* And Chriſt bids us *go to our Father in Secret, and our Father which ſeeth in Secret will reward us openly,* Mat. 6.6. This was the Refuge which the Godly run to in all their ſtreights: Hither *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* went, *Gen.* 18.27. & 28.3. & 32.11. Hither *Moſes*

goes

goes, when God threatned *Israel*, *Exod.* 39. 11. Yea, *Joshua*, *Hannah*, *Samuel*, *David*, *Solomon*, *Elijah*, *Jehoshaphat*, *Hezekiah*, *Peter*, and *Christ* himself, and thus he taught us to do, *Mat.* 6. 9. *Our Father, which art in Heaven.* Many are the Promises which are made to those that go to God, in the Name of Christ; and many are the Experiences which Believers have had of the Return of Prayers made to God. But in the whole Book of God there is not one Precept for, or approved Example, of any one, that sought either to Saint, or Angel; nor any Promise to any that do so, or any Experience that any have had any Return to their Prayer; no, nor encouragement to provoke us to believe that God approves it, but the contrary. There is nothing in Scripture to ground our Faith upon, and *what is not of Faith, is Sin.* We may find God himself stiled, A God, Hearing Prayers; A Title given to no Creature, in Heaven, or in Earth. God is Omniscient, and knows all things; the very thoughts, and wishes, the sighs and breathings, the longings, hungrings, and pantings of a broken Heart, are known to him; and he knows when Prayers proceed from unfeigned Lips; he is *Hoker Lebb*, *Scrutator Cordis*; *The Searcher of the Heart*, Jer. 17. 10. And 'tis a Priviledge, that no man on Earth can claim; neither have we any assurance, that Saints, or Angels in Heaven can do it. Again, he is every where present, at all times, and in all places (which the Angels themselves are not, being finite Creatures), and therefore is always in a readiness to help. We know he hears our Prayers, but have no assurance that the others do: He is Omnipotent, and able to help us; he is, *El Shaddai*, *God*

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All-sufficient, Gen. 17. 1. Able to remove all rubs out of the way; but the Creature cannot help us, they are but the Ciſtern, he is the Fountain, they have no more than what he puts into them. Yea, all Religious Worſhip is due to him alone, whereof Prayer is a principal part, and cannot be given to another without offence. 'Tis from him that *we receive every good and perfect gift*, James 1. 17. and therefore unto him we ſhould go to beg it, who keeps the diſpoſe of them in his own hands, and will be ſought unto before he part with them. God is the Object of our Faith, and ſhould be of our Prayers; for, *How can we call upon him, upon whom we have not believed*, Rom. 10. 14. The very Heathen, by the Light of Nature, acknowledge this Priviledge; this Duty was due to God alone: they put up their Petitions, to thoſe they eſteemed gods, as the Mariners in *Jonah*'s Ship, called every man upon his god; and adviſed *Jonah* to do ſo alſo, *Jonah* 1. 5. And God himſelf threatens the Families that call not upon his Name, *Jer.* 10. 25. And in their diſtreſs threatens to ſend them to the gods they ſerve. How much then are thoſe to blame that Pray to Saints, and Angels, as the Papiſts; or offer up Religious Worſhip to any other but to God alone, but till they can prove it a Duty by direct precept, or approved Example; till they can prove they are Omnipreſent, always at hand; Omniſcient, and know all things; Omnipotent, and can help us in all our ſtraits, which they will never do; lets us never leave the Fountain that is all this, and go to the Ciſtern that cannot help us.

4. *Direct.* If thou wouldſt ſpeed in Prayer, then go to God in the Name of Chriſt; if thou take

take him not along with thee, thou wilt not be welcom; if thou come not cloathed in thy Elder Brothers Garments, thou wilt return without the Bleſſing. We are by Nature Enemies to God, and he is a conſuming Fire to his Enemies, and Chriſt muſt be the Skreen, to keep us from burning; 'tis he alone that can Reconcile us to his Father: 'Tis he in whom he is well pleaſed, and through him he cannot be offended: He is the High-Prieſt, that Offers up the Prayers of his People, when he hath perfumed them with the Incenſe of his own Righteouſneſs, *Rev.* 8. 3. 'Tis he that preſents their Prayers to God, and makes them acceptable, which otherwiſe would be abominable: He is the Altar, whereon a broken Heart muſt Offer up the Sacrifice of Prayer, and Praiſe. Now, when I ſpeak of going to God in the Name of Chriſt, I do not only mean uſing Chriſt's Name to God, or Concluding our Prayers with ſuch words, *through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, Amen.* Though this is Lawful, if ſerious, yet not ſufficient; we read of ſome, Mat. 7. 22. that had Preached in his Name, and in his Name had caſt out Devils, and in his Name had done many wonderful works; and 'tis probable, they had prayed in his Name alſo, and yet he would not own them. But thoſe that come in his Name, muſt believe in him for Salvation; roul themſelves upon him, lay hold upon him by a Lively Faith, for their Lord and Saviour; for their Head, and Husband; for their Mediator, and Advocate; and give up themſelves wholly unto him: Take him upon his own terms, as he is offered in the Goſpel; to love him above all, and forſake all others for him; to obey him in all, though all the World be offended

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at it; to resign up our selves, and all we have to be at his dispose; to be willing to be any thing, do any thing, suffer any thing, he would have us; and so to come with Confidence to God, trusting in the Merits of Christ; believing that for his sake we shall have our sins pardoned, our wants supplyed, and our Souls saved. He is the only way to the Father, and without him we can have no Admittance; he opens the doors, and brings us into the Presence-Chamber, *Eph.* 2. 18. He is the only Mediator between God and Man, *Heb.* 9. 14. 1 *Tim.* 2. 5. Now, God never gave any such Honour to the Saints, nor Angels, in the Scripture, though he denies them none that is their due. Many Promises we have, that whatsoever we ask in Christ's Name, shall be given us, *John* 14. 13. But no promise in Scripture of prevailing in any other Name: Nay, the contrary; for if *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job* departed Saints, whom God dearly Loved, could not be heard for Son or Daughter, *Ezek.* 14. 14, &c. What hopes can we have of others? Perhaps, the Papists will tell us, they do not pray to Saints, or Angels, that they should help them, but only Mediate for them; but who made them Mediators? There is only one Mediator between God and Man, even the Lord Christ Jesus, 1 *Tim.* 2. 5. And there is no other qualified for the Office: 'Tis necessary that he must be both God, and Man; that is, to Mediate between God and Man, and that he be perfectly Righteous, which no Son of *Adam*, Christ excepted, ever was: All others have Oyl little enough, and none to spare. Neither doth the Scripture make mention of any other; nay, excludes all other: For Christ is called the only Mediator. None can

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make our imperfect prayers acceptable to God, but he; none can be present in all places, to receive all Petitions, but he. The Saints and Angels are but finite Creatures, and cannot be in all places at once; and what assurance can we have, when we pray that they are present, and hear all prayers, and understand all Languages: How can *Peter*, or the *Virgin Mary*, at the same time, be present at *Rome*, *Venice*, *London*, and ten thousand places at once, if they are not Infinite? As we have no Precept in Scripture, to make these our Mediators; no more have we Examples of any that did, though there were many Saints then dead, *Job* 5. 1. To which of the Saints wilt thou turn? 'Tis Christ alone that knows that meaning of the Spirit, in the hearts of the Faithful, *Rom.* 8. 27. And in his Name we must go to God, if we would be heard.

5. *Direct.* If thou wouldst put up prevalent Prayer at the Throne of Grace, look well to the matter of them; ask nothing of God but what thou hast some ground to believe thou shalt receive from God. Every thing will no more bear a Prayer, than every stream will a Ship. Thou oughtest not to pray for those things which are against the Glory of God, the Edification, and good of the Church, and thy own, and others Salvation: They are rather Curses, than Prayers, that are poured out by wicked men for the Extirpation of a Faithful Ministry, and the rooting out of the Godly, or the power of Godliness; and these will prevail for a Curse upon the Head, and Heart of the Imprecator. Thou must not pray for a Commission to break thy Sovereign's Laws; this will not be granted: Or, to do things contrary

to his revealed, or for any thing evil in it ſelf; or that which is contrary to God's Nature to grant; or contrary to his Eternal decree. Thou muſt not pray for a diſpenſation to ſin, and for aſſiſtance in the Act of Sin; or to reconcile *God* and *Mammon*, or *Chriſt* and *Belial*; or for Salvation without Sanctification; or for Pardon of Sin, without Faith and Repentance. Neither oughteſt thou to pray for Trifles, and things of ſmall concernment; 'tis not fit for a Subject to go to his Prince, to beg a Point, or a Pin. Neither ſhouldeſt thou pray for that which thou wilt not endeavour to get: Many could wiſh for Heaven, that will not work for Heaven. But thou maiſt pray for all thoſe good things; for Soul, or Body; for this Life, or that to come; for thy ſelf, or others; which are neceſſary, which God hath Commanded thee to ask, or promiſed in his Word to give. Thou haſt a good Foundation for thy Faith, to ask what Divine Writ Warrants thee to ask, or promiſes ſhall be given. And thou muſt beg them as they are promiſed; what is abſolutely promiſed thou maiſt beg abſolutely: And what is conditionally promiſed, beg it if God ſee it good for thee: *Ye ask, and have not*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *becauſe ye ask amiſs*. The Apoſtles are reproved, that would have asked Fire from Heaven, to burn up the unprofitable *Samaritans*, *Luke* 9. 54. Every Petition ſhould be grounded upon the Word of God, and not upon Carnal Conceits: We ſhould ask what God thinks fit, and not what we our ſelves think fit: It was an unanſwerable Petition of the Mother of *Zebedee*'s Children, that her Sons might ſit, one at Chriſt's Right Hand, and the other at his Left, in his Kingdom. If we ask any thing accor-

according to his Will, he will grant it us, 1 *John* 5. 14. Where God Commands us to ask, and promiſes us to give; here is a double ground of aſſurance. Now, the good things we ſhould beg of God for our ſelves, or others, are either Spiritual, or Temporal: Thoſe which are Spiritual, are abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, or they are not; thoſe that are, are theſe, or the like: The Spirit of God, Faith, Repentance, and the reſt of the Graces of God's Spirit; theſe we muſt beg abſolutely, becauſe they are not promiſed upon Condition: Others are not ſo neceſſary to the Being, but the well-being of a Chriſtian: As Peace of Conſcience, Aſſurance, Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, *&c.* And theſe, as they are not abſolutely promiſed, nor abſolutely neceſſary, ſhould be asked with ſubmiſſion to the Will of God, as he ſees it beſt for us. Temporal Bleſſings, as Meat, Drink, Cloaths, Health, Peace, Proſperity, *&c.* We muſt beg in ſubmiſſion to God's Will; as we have Chriſt for an Example, *Not my Will, but thine be done.* Every Prayer muſt be grounded upon Faith, when the promiſe is conditional; you ſhall have them, if they be good for you, you muſt pray, Lord give them, if they be good for me; and for the Circumſtances, we muſt not limit the Holy one of *Iſrael*, to time, place, manner, meaſure, or ſuch like: And in Deprecation of evils, Spiritual, or Temporal; obſerve alſo this Rule, that which hinders Salvation, pray abſolutely it may be removed; if not, ſubmit unto the Will of God: Theſe Rules obſerved, thou maiſt expect an Anſwer.

6. *Direct.* Wouldeſt thou put up a pleaſing, and prevailing Prayer unto God, then thou muſt

regard the manner of it, as well as the matter. Every Prayer, good for the Matter, is not acceptable to God, becauſe 'tis exceeded in the manner of the performance. A wicked Man may put up a good Petition, when God regards it not. *Balaam*'s wiſh was good, to dye the Death of the Righteous, and that his laſt end might be like his. Now, as it muſt proceed from a Right Fountain; a Heart purified by Faith: So every Petition muſt be pointed by Faith, or it will never pierce Heaven. Nay, 'tis not enough to have Faith in the Habit, but it muſt be in the Exercise alſo, and drawn out into the Act, *without Faith we cannot pleaſe God*, Heb. 11. 6. No wonder then, if many mens prayers are rejected, *for all men have not Faith.* Now, Faith helps a man to a Foundation to build upon, the Promiſes, and Attributes of God; this keeps the Heart from wavering, and the Soul from fluctuating. It points us out to Chriſt, the Mediator, ſitting at the Right hand of God; which offers up our prayers, and brings us an Anſwer of peace. Now, though Faith be abſolutely neceſſary, yet 'tis not ſufficient; there muſt be Repentance alſo, and hatred of ſin: *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, God will not hear my Prayer*, Pſal. 66. 18. *Non prodeſt medicam ſalum, dum ferrum in vulnere*, let every Sin thou confeſſeſt, draw ſorrow from thy Heart; and, if poſſible, Tears from thine Eyes; ſuch prayers are likelieſt to prevail with that God that cannot behold Iniquity with approbation. So likewiſe Zeal, and fervency is a neceſſary Qualification; 'tis not every cold Petition will get Admittance at the Throne of Grace, or pierce the Ears of God; he hears not ſluggiſh prayers, this puts denials into his

his Mouth: Every one can deny a cold Suitor. Had the Woman of *Samaria* been of this Temper, she had gone away without an Answer. We should *be fervent in Spirit, serving God*, Rom. 12. 11. 'Tis God's complaint, *Hos.* 7. 14. *They have not cryed unto me with their Heart.* Prayer is a part of God's Worship, and a Curse is threatned to them that do the Work of the Lord negligently. The business is of great Concernment, and therefore should not be slightly performed. If a Man were to beg for his Life, how earnest would he be? He would use all the Arguments he could, and beg heartily. Now, this is for thy Life, and the Life of thy Soul; if thou prevail, well and good; if not, thou art undone; Men, or Angels cannot help thee, thy Diseases are so many, and thy wants so great. These Zealous Prayers are sometimes called, the renting of the heart, *Joel* 2. 13. Sometimes wrastling with God; and thus *Jacob* wrastled, and prevailed: And in Scripture 'tis sometimes expressed by the Motions of the Body; *Hannah* moved her Lips, *Solomon* spread abroad his Hands, the Publican beat his Breast, and *Christ* fell upon the Ground. Sometimes 'tis expresst by deep Sighs, and Groans, which cannot be expresst, *Rom.* 8. 26. Sometimes by loud Crys, *Psal.* 32. 3. Sometimes by often repeating the same Words, as in *Christ*, *Mat.* 26. 30. And sometimes by bitter Tears, as in *Peter*, *Mat.* 26. 75. *Heb.* 5, 7. *Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up Prayers and Supplications with strong Crys and Tears*, &c. Yet this is not enough, we must also watch and pray, or watch in prayer, 'tis Christ's own Command. Now, Watching is the proper Act of the Body, 'tis but Metaphori-

cally Attributed to the Soul: Now, both are required; if the Body sleep, the Soul cannot watch; and if the Soul snort in Security, Bodily Exercise profiteth little. Watch that there be no sin lying upon thy Conscience, or Lived, or delighted in; that there be no passion predominant in the Soul, no Temptation of Satan entertained, no Worldly thoughts foisted in to spoil thy Duty, no drousiness creeping upon thee; watch that thy Heart grow neither Cold nor Lazy, in the performance, or steal away from the Duty; that Pride, nor self appear there; that no roving Imagination, vain thoughts, or needless tautologies appear there: But above all, take heed thou come not in thine own strength, but by the assistance of the Spirit of God, perform the Duty which is given to this end, *Gal.* 4. 6. *Rom.* 8. 26. *Jude* 20. Praying in the Holy Ghost, this illuminates the heart, discovers what is sin, and what is Duty; what a Man is, what he hath, and what he wants; what a God he hath to deal with, what he requires, and worketh in us, both the Will, and the Deed.

7. *Direct.* If thou wouldest speed well at the Throne of Grace, be sure to demean thy self well after the Duty; if thou miscarry, then thou wilt lose all thy Labour; think not that the Duty is over when thou art off thy Knees; no, there is good part behind: Call thy Heart to an Account, how it hath carried it self in the Duty; if this were duly done, it durst not wander, as it usually doth, for fear of a check; and having found out it's carriage, be affected accordingly; if well, rejoyce, and bless God for it; it was he that kept it in Order: If ill, check it, and make it smart for it,

and

and ſtir it up by ſome rouſing Conſiderations. Examine alſo what aſſiſtance thou haſt had from the Spirit of God, God promiſes the aſſiſtance of his Spirit, in the Inditing their prayers, and teaching them what to ask; if he have made good this promiſe, bleſs God for it, and be encouraged by it for the future; and expect the fulfilling thoſe deſires that the Spirit aſſiſted in the powring out: If thou haſt not met with this aſſiſtance, 'tis, doubtleſs, thy own fault; for God never breaks his promiſe, if we keep the Condition; ſearch out the fault, and amend for the future; ſet Faith on work for the return of thy prayers, for no doubt, if thou prayeſt according to God's Will, thou ſhalt receive the Mercy prayed for. Many deal by their prayers, as fooliſh Children by their Arrows; they ſhoot at Rovers, and mark not where they light: Moſt Men loſe their prayers, and heed not whether God hears them, or not; Anſwers them, or not; they make prayer the end of prayer; and reſt ſatisfied, if the work be done, without on Anſwer; they obſerve not where they light, or what comes of them. If thy *Petition* be Lawful, expect an Anſwer; if it come, be ſure that which is gotten by prayer, be worn with Thankſgiving; be not like the unthankful Lepers, go away, and let God hear no more of you. And when thou prayeſt againſt any ſin, be ſure to ſet Heart and Hand on work, to Mortifie that ſin. And when thou prayeſt for any Mercies, be ſure to Labour what thou canſt, in the uſe of means to attain that Mercy; 'tis a vain wiſh which is not ſeconded with endeavours: 'tis but a mocking of God, that will not be mocked; and a ridiculous thing to pray for that he will not endeavour for:

As if a man ſhould pray to come to *London*, and will not ſet a ſtep that way. If thou prayeſt for Spiritual Bleſſings, uſe means to obtain them; and if for Temporal things, be diligent in the uſe of a Lawful Calling: 'tis the hand of the diligent that makes Rich. When thou prayeſt for thy Neighbour, be as willing to help him, to thy power, as to pray for him. Many men ſhew more Divinity in their Words, than Humanity in their Actions; one penny is more hardly got from them than thrice God help you. And when thou haſt put up thy Requeſts, then with patience wait for an Anſwer; as *Hannah*, when ſhe had poured out her Soul to God, ſhe depended upon him, and looked no more ſad, 1 *Sam.* 1. 18. It may be, though God hath promiſed, and will perform; yet he will not give it at the firſt asking; he will make thee ſeek again, and wait alſo. When *Peter* was in *Priſon*, and the Church prayed for his deliverance, it was the laſt Night, before God granted their Petitions, *Acts* 12. 5, 6. But be it ſooner, or later, when the Mercy comes, give God his Tribute of praiſe; this he requires, *Pſal.* 50. 15. And this was *David's* practice, *Pſal.* 116. 2. And Chriſt chargeth this upon the *Lepers*, as their fault. If he deny thy Requeſt, ſeek out what is the cauſe, and, perhaps, thou maiſt find ſome ſin un-repented of, and then no wonder if God hear thee not; reſolve, with *Saul*, it ſhall dye, though it be thy *Jonathan*, 1 *Sam.* 4. 37. Deſtroy that *Achan* that offends God, and troubles *Iſrael*. Or, perhaps, the Petition required is not ſutable; or thou failedſt either in the manner, or end; if ſo, be more wary the next time. If neither of theſe wait for an Anſwer, ſet upon the

Duty

Duty with ſtronger reſolutions, if prayer be not ſtrong enough, joyn Faſting: Some ſins, like ſome Devils, come not out but by prayer, and faſting. If thou canſt not do it thy ſelf, call in help; take theſe Directions, and thou wilt find the banefit of prayer.

CHAP. VII.

Directions in, and about Singing of Pſalms.

THE Next Duty I ſhall Inſtruct you in, is Singing of Pſalms: A Duty much preſt, and practiſed, both in the time of the Law, and in the time of the Goſpel; and many thouſands of Believers have received benefit, and have been refreſhed by it. The Book of *Pſalms*, 'tis evident, is of Divine Inſtitution. and compiled by the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God: And though ſundry other pieces of Scripture, have been by ſeveral Perſons, in ſeveral Ages, called in Queſtion, yet this was never Queſtioned by any. 'Tis expreſly mentioned by the Apoſtle *Peter*, *Acts* 1. 20. Yea, is acknowledged to be Canonical Scripture, by Chriſt himſelf, the great Doctor of the Church, *Luke* 20. 42. *And* David *himſelf ſaith, in the Book of Pſalms, the Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou on my right hand, till I make thine Enemies thy Foot-ſtool*, Luke 24. 44. *All things muſt be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of* Moſes, *and in*

in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. The Hebrew Title of this Book, is, *Sepher Tehillim*, a Book of Hymns, because it chiefly consists in praise and thanksgiving unto God, for his benefits: And this Title seems to be taken from the Inscription of the 145 Psalm, where the word is used; and the whole Psalm spends it self in the praises of God. In the Scripture indeed, we read of Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, *Eph.* 5. 19. *Col.* 3. 16. But what the difference is between these, is not easie to shew; no doubt, one, and the same Psalm, may admit of either of these Names. Some have distinguished them thus, Psalms, say they, are those that contain Exhortation to Holiness, and Directions to an Holy Life: Hymns contain praises to God, for his benefits, Spiritual, and Temporal; and Spiritual Songs are a mixture of both. The Original word *Mizmar*, comes from a word that signifies cutting off superfluous things, and signifies a composure of Harmonious words, without Superfluity, or Excess; and 'tis sufficient, that the whole Book, containing several Subjects, is called by this one name, of Psalms; even by Christ himself. Now, this Divine Ordinance, or Holy Duty, though both Commanded; and Commended, and practised by Christ, and his Apostles, and the Church of God, even down from *David's* Time, to this day; yet is denyed by some, and Questioned by others, to be a Duty; but I think they may Question (as some indeed do) all the Ordinances, as well as this; for, what but the Ignorance, or wilful perverting of the Scripture, can be the ground of such a denial? It may be indeed, they have never performed this Duty as they ought to do, and so never received

received that benefit and refreshing from it, that others have done; and hence they judge it is unprofitable, and condemn the Ordinance for their own fault. But doubtless, many thousands of Believers, may speak out their Experiences, and tell you, they have been refreshed by it. That it is a Christian Duty, shall, God willing, be further shewed you; and that 'tis both profitable and pleasant, is easie to prove. The Psalms are a Rich Store-House of all manner of Provision; and those that are conversant herein cannot be Ignorant of it. Here are Instructions for the Ignorant to lead them in the way to Heaven, and guide them by all the by-ways of Error, and Folly; here are Incitations to the dull, and sluggish, to rouse them up out of the sleep of Security. Here are prayers to draw down Mercies from God, and praises to God for Mercies received. What shall I say? Whatsoever Estate a Christian can be in, here he may find Comfort, or Company, or both. Here, as in a Glass, are represented, and set forth, the thoughts, the words, and Actings of a gracious Soul, in every Condition; and the Experience they have had of God's help at hand, in every Condition: How oft doth the *Psalmist* begin like *Jonah* in the belly of Hell? And is raised up to Heaven before the Conclusion. And 'tis wonder that any should desist from such an Angelical duty, which so much resembles Heaven: But because many, no doubt, out of Conscience, Question the Duty: I shall first prove the Duty Lawful, and then give my Advice, how it may be performed.

1. *Direct.* If thou wouldest perform this Duty acceptably to God, and profitably to thy self, be well

well convinc'd that it is thy Duty; halt not between two Opinions, do it chearfully, and understandingly; which thou canst not do, so long as thou doubtest whether it be thy Duty, or whether God will own it at thy Hands; *Whatsoever is not of Faith, is Sin*, Rom. 14. 23. To this End, view the Arguments following, which I suppose may be sufficient to prove it thy Duty. My business in this Treatise is not to meddle with Controversies; yet so far as the digression may be tolerable, and my Method and Design will allow, I shall speak something for thy Satisfaction. Consider therefore, God hath furnished Man for this Duty, in giving him this Musical Faculty; with which, as with all the rest, he should Glorifie God: And how can he Glorifie him better with it, than with Trumpetting out his praise, and Singing forth his Glory? This is the way that *David* stirs up his Tongue to praise God. This was an acceptable Service unto God, even before the Ceremonial Law was given, *Exod.* 15. 1. *Then Sang* Moses *and the Children of* Israel *this Song unto the Lord*, &c. By this means also the Spirit of God is stirred up in us, *Eph.* 5. 18, 19, *Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to your selves in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs.* This leaves a sweet relish and delight upon the Spirit, *Psal.* 104. 33, 34. *I will sing unto the Lord as long as I Live; I will sing unto my God while I have my Being; my Meditation of him shall be sweet.* Nay, this is that which Saints and Angels do in Heaven, and shall do for ever: Thus the Angels did, *Isa*, 63. even with an Audible voice: As also of our Saviours Birth, *Luke* 2. 13. & *Rev.* 5. 8, 9. & 14. 3. & 15. 3. And this shall be their work for ever. Yea, it hath been

been Prophesied, that there shall be Singing in Gospel times, *Isa.*20. . *In that day shall this Song be sung.* Isa.52.8. *Thy Watch-men shall lift up the voyce, with the voyce together shall they Sing*, &c. Which the Apostle Interprets to be in Gospel Times, *Heb.* 2.12. Yea, all Nations are stirred up to sing praises unto God, *Psal.* 100.1. *Psal.* 95.12. Which includes both *Jews*, and *Gentiles*, and must be understood of Gospel Times, as 'tis Interpreted, *Heb.* 4.3. Neither can this Duty under the Law be Typical; for neither Scripture, nor Reason can shew, that Singing Psalms Typified out a Believers Singing with the Heart in Gospel Times, any more than prayer with the Voyce, Typifies out praying with the Heart. Nay, *Christ*, and his *Apostles*, after his departure, would not have used it, had it been Ceremonial: If this serve not, we have plain Scripture Commands for the Duty, even in Gospel Times, *Eph.* 5.19. *Speaking to your selves in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Singing with Melody in your Hearts*, Col. 3. 16. *Teaching, and Admonishing one another, in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, singing with Grace in your Hearts to the Lord*, James 4.9. *If any be Afflicted, let him Pray; and if any be Merry, let him sing Psalms.* Now, all this shews this is a Duty: If yet, this satisfie not, we have the best Examples, to warrant us. I shall set before you the Angels, at the Birth of Christ, *Luke* 2.13. And the Holy Men of God in the Time of the Law; *David was called, The sweet Singer of* Israel: But this is not all; we have the Example of *Christ* himself, and his Disciples, which is without Exception, *Mat.* 26.30. *After Supper they sung an Hymn*; which probably was the same

which

which the *Jews* were accuſtomed to ſing, at the Paſſeover, *viz.* thoſe Songs of Degrees, from *Pſal.* 112, &c. to *Pſal* 118. 19. However, this ſhews the Lawfulneſs of the Duty. We have alſo the Example of *Paul* and *Silas*, that Sang in the Priſon, with an Audible Voice, for the Priſoners heard them, *Acts* 26. 25. We have alſo the practice of the Church down ſince the Apoſtles Time; and all thoſe cannot likely perſiſt in an Error, ſo long: This we have for our Warrant, and little can be ſaid againſt it; and therefore I ſhall conclude 'tis a Lawful, and Laudable practice.

2. *Direct.* Is concerning the Matter of our Singing, which muſt be Holy, not Prophane; to God's Glory, & not our own: There are many that think it is a Goſpel-Duty, to Sing Pſalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, and yet they Scruple the Singing of *David*'s Pſalms; and thus they ſeek a knot in a Ruſh: *David*'s Pſalms were an Acceptable Service unto God; and we read not where ever God diſclaimed them; They were uſed, and Sung, not only by himſelf, but others; not only in his own Time, but in ſucceeding Generations; where they Praiſed God with *David*'s words: As we find in *Solomon*'s Time, 2 *Chron.* 5. 13. In *Jehoſhaphat*'s Time, 2 *Chron.* 20. 21. In *Hezekiah*'s Time, 2 *Chron.* 29. 20. In *Ezra*'s Time, *Ezra* 3. 10, 11. In the two former places, we find *David*'s words uſed; in the two latter we find an expreſs Command, and Example of Praiſing God with *David*'s words, and with the words of *Aſaph*: You ſee the eſtimate the Church of God put upon them; yea, as may be apparently proved, they were thus in uſe, even to Chriſt's Time, as Hiſtory

story Records, these Psalms of *David* in the times of the Law, were sung by the four and twenty Orders of Musicians, which seem to Typifie out the Twenty four Elders, men ioned *Rev.* 5.8. The Song of *Moses*, the Servant of God, *Exod.* 15.1, *&c.* Was Sung, not only by him, but by the People; not only by Men, but Women also, *Exod.* 15. 20, 21. Yea, *Moses* was Commanded to write his other Song, and teach it unto the Children of *Israel*; and put it into their Mouths, *Deut.* 31. 19. And to what purpose was it thus written, and thus to be learnt, but that they should sing it? I have already proved we ought to Sing Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, the very Name gives unto *David*'s Psalms. Nay, there is strong probability that Christ himself, when he was upon the Earth, Sang *David*'s Psalms at the close of his Supper; for if he would conform to the Custom of the *Jews*, to Sing an Hymn at the close of the Passeover; What ground have we to think he did not conform to them in Singing the same Hymn, which they were wont to do: which was as hath been said, *David*'s Hymns; however, the Scriptures make mention of no other. And 'tis observed, that the Ancient Hebrew Copy of Saint *Matthew*'s Gospel gives favourable Light unto it, by making use of the word there, which is the Title unto *David*'s Psalms. We find also the Apostle Pen'd good part of the Second Psalm, *Acts* 4. 24. and why not Sing it? And if Christ, and his Apostles had had any other Hymns, they would have been left upon Record, as some of their Prayers are; but no such thing is to be found. Nay, we read that the Angels themselves, in their Cœlestial Harmony, conforming themselves to the words

of

of *David*, and allude unto the Song of *Moses*, the Servant of the Lord; and therefore, doubtless, 'tis not unlawful for us to do thus. 'Tis true indeed, we are Commanded to sing in the Spirit, and so we may, if we use a Form indited by the Spirit, and Sing them with the Heart, and Understanding: We are Commanded to Pray by the Spirit; and can any Imagine, but so we may, though we use the Form Christ hath bid us use. But if we expect an immediate impulse of the Spirit; dictating to us both sense, and Meeter, and putting words into our Mouths as we sing; not one of a thousand, if ever any at all, will be found to have such a gift. Indeed, in the Apostles days, when extraordinary gifts were given, some such thing might be, which now cannot be expected, any more than the gift of Healing: And seeing that *David* and *Moses*, Men endued with the Spirit, Pen their Songs for the Publick good; let us be contented to see by their Light, and not presume to compare with them, much less, to exceed them: We may find special Psalms appointed upon special occasions; as for the Sabbath day, *&c.* And the Book of Psalms is so perfect a Sentence, that there needs no Addition; and if it did, doubtless, God would have directed some to have perfected the work; 'tis a great boldness for any man not indued with the Spirit of God, to thrust upon the Church an Hymn of his own making, and lay aside those indited by the Spirit: If we must Sing, it must be *David*'s Psalms, or worse; I think no humble man will compare the beats of his own brain with the immediate impulses of the Spirit: I know not what Warrant we have to leave the one, to use the other.

3. *Direct.*

3. *Direct.* Be satisfied also concerning the Persons obliged to perform this Duty; for some that confess 'tis a Christian Duty to be done in Gospel Times, yet think not that all Christians are hereby engaged: Some conceive 'tis the Ministers Duty alone; as he is the Mouth of the People to God in Prayer, so should he also be in Singing; and the rest should tacitely consent, and joyn in Heart, but should not vocally sing. 'Tis easily granted, that a godly Man, for his own solace, may sing alone; and thus *David* did his Night-Songs upon his Bed, *Psal.* 77. 6. And 'tis evident also in the Primitive Times, when the gift of Tongues was in use, and other extraordinary gifts, which now are ceased: One that had a *Psalm* given by Divine Inspiration, might, and did Sing alone, and the rest joyned, as afore-said, and said Amen to it: For it was impossible, and improbable, that all should sing together by such a Divine rapture. But this gift failing, and *David's Psalms* Lawful; yea, the best we have, or can have: The whole Church may joyn in these, not only in Heart, but in Voice: I think this need not be controverted. God, that is the God of Order, and never established, or owned Confusion, hath formerly owned this, as I have shewed: Where Priests, and People; Men, and Women, joyned together, as in *Moses* Song, *Exod.* 15. 1, 2, *&c.* The whole Church of *Colos* was exhorted hereunto, *Col.* 3. 16. And not the Pastours, and Select Elders only: And if God would have such Select Choristers for this Work in Gospel Times, he would have given Instructions, and Directions for their Qualification, and Election, as he hath done for other Officers, besides some Ministers otherwise Godly, and able, are

not fitted for this Duty, neither have they such a Musical Faculty, as to be fit to be the Mouth of the People in this Duty: And God hath indued many of the People in this, beyond their Minister; and doubtless, it is not given in vain: *Moses* and the Children of *Israel* Sang together, *Ex.* 15. 1, 2, *&c.* Yea, in Gospel Times, *Christ*, and his *Disciples*, *Mat.* 26. 30. The like we read of *Paul* and *Silas*; and why should we doubt that have such Leaders? I know not. The Angels that were ten thousand times ten thousand: yea, thousands of thousands, joyned together without Confusion, *Rev.* 5. 11, 12. But you will say, here is no Expression of Singing: See then those hundred forty and four Thousand, that followed the Lamb; those sang a new Song, which no other could Learn, *Rev.* 14. 1. 3. And this shall be the Saints work for ever. But some question whether Women may sing in the Church, and think they have cause enough for their doubt, because the Apostle doth peremptorily forbid a Woman to speak in the Church; but she cannot sing, but she must speak, 1 *Cor.* 14 34. But this is grounded upon a mistake: Indeed, they ought not to speak by way of Office, or Publick Teaching, but must be under the Authority of her Husband: Neither to make Questions there, but at Home, lest they transcend the bounds of Modesty; but that they must not speak at all, will not be proved. *Sapphira* spake, when *Peter* demanded her Answer. Nay, then they must not say Amen, to the Prayers, a Duty enjoyned to all in general. We read of *Miram*, and the Women, they Sang, and were not reproved, *Exod.* 15. 20, 21. And that it was the practice in the Primitive Times, for Men and

and Women to Sing together: The Ecclesiastical History may inform you. But some Men doubt whether Carnal Men and Women ought to Sing, or whether Christians ought to joyn with them, if they do; and the reason is, they think hereby they hold Fellowship with them: But what Reason is there that a Man may pray in a mixt Congregation, and not sing, when as this is but a more deliberate sort of Prayer; the Voice is Natural, the Tune Artificial; so far we may joyn, and the Matter is common to both: And for the Manner, if they sing Spiritually, then they are fit to be joyned with; if not, what Spiritual Communion have we with them? No question, but it is their Duty, and why may we not joyn with a Man doing his Duty? *Moses* Sang with a Rebellious People, and God Commanded him to write his Song, as a Witness against them, *Deut.* 31. 19. And there is no Psalm, but every one in the Congregation may Learn some Instruction from it, and make some good use of it.

4. *Direct.* Be well satisfied also in Singing *David*'s Psalms, as they are turned into *English* Meeter; for this also in our Age is become a Scruple unto many: For when they cannot deny this to be a Duty, yet they exclaim against this as a Humane Invention, which hath no Warrant from the Word of God. 'Tis true, we have no Command, *totidem verbis*, for so doing; no more have we for the Translation of the *Hebrew* Bible into *English*. But doubtless, if *English-men* ought to study the Scripture, and read it, 'tis necessary that it be Translated into a Language they understand. If *David*'s Psalms may, and ought to be Sung by *English-men*, it is to be Translated into *English*, or how

can they Sing with the Underſtanding? And why ſhould it not be Sung in the *Engliſh* manner; which is, when 'tis fitted with apt meaſure, ſyllables, and Meeter, as *Engliſh-men* uſe in their Songs; and not only them, but alſo other Nations. If it be Lawful to Tranſlate the *Hebrew* Bible into Proſe, in reference to Reading; why not into Meeter, in reference to Singing? As for the former, I know none but the Papiſts that deny it; who would thereby keep the People in Ignorance, that their own Jugling ſhould not be ſpied: But doubtleſs, if this Command of Searching the Scriptures, and letting the Word of God dwell plentifully in us, *&c.* belong to *Engliſh-men*, they muſt be Tranſlated into the *Engliſh* Tongue, that they may be able to do it, which not one of a thouſand could do in the Original Language. Now, God Commands us to Sing Pſalms, as well as Read the Scriptures; which very few are able to do, ſo long as they are lockt up in the Original *Hebrew*; & therefore the Tranſlation is neceſſary: And that they ſhould be fitted with ſuch Meaſures, and quantity of Syllables as is neceſſary to make them fit to be Sung the more Melodiouſly, by *Engliſh men*. I know not why any ſhould deny this; for why may not *Hebrew* Verſe, and Meeter, be turned into *Engliſh* Verſe, and Meeter, I ſee not; as well as *Hebrew* Proſe into *Engliſh* Proſe? In the *Hebrew* they are fitted to be Sung, and Poetically Compiled; and many Verſes together in ſome Pſalms are in Meeter, as the Skilful in the Tongue affirm; as *Buxtorfius*, in his *Theſaurus*, and others. And why ſhould not the *Engliſh* have their manner of Singing, as well as the *Hebrews*, and other Nations? And why ſhould not the Tranſlators preſerve

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the Elegancy of the Original Language? Which they cannot do, if they should let slip, and neglect those Poetical Fancies, Accents, Tones, and Tunes, which the *Hebrews* kept; and with which the Psalms, and other Poetical parts of Scripture are pen'd: And therefore Poetry is no Humane Invention, but used by the Holy Ghost himself, in the Penning of the Scripture; and may, no doubt, be used Lawfully by the Translator also. But those, that by a Common, and Ordinary gift compose Psalms, and Hymns; both for Matter, and Manner, this is a Humane Invention; especially if imposed upon the Church, or read suddenly before Consideration be had before, by the Church; whether they are according to the Scripture, yea, or no. Nay, the Translating of the Scripture may as well be called an Humane Invention as this. Neither can it be called an Humane Imposition, when none are compelled to Sing, nor no punishment threatned for the neglect. But some will say, the Translation is full of Errors, and therefore we cannot joyn in the Duty: Alas! what can be done of Man, but it will appear to be done by Man? The best Translation of the Scriptures is not without its faults; and shall we therefore use none? When Men do their endeavour, God takes the Will for the Deed. The *Septuagint* Translation is abundantly faulty, as the Learned know; and often varies from the *Hebrew-Text*: Yet *Christ* and his Apostles make use of it. Nay, in the *Hebrew* Copy, as 'tis observed in the Old Testament, there are 800. divers Readings; and in the *Greek* Testament, above a Thousand. God hath, 'tis true, promised to keep his word to a tittle, but not in this, or that Copy, or Translation, but in

the whole; we have the whole. Some say, that Translating it into *English* Meeter, there is often adding to, and taking from, contrary to God's absolute Command, *Deut* 12. *last*. But consider, here is no Addition, but an Explication; no Duty added, only the words altered, the sense remaining; and a Translation may admit of such a Cavil, and all Expositions will hereby come under the Reproof: You may as well say, that Preaching, opening, and applying Scripture, is adding to it; for here are more words used: Thus you see none have need to Scruple the Duty.

5. *Direct.* As concerning the Tune, wherein those Scripture Psalms are to be sung; for in this also is some Controversie: For some charge it to be a Humane Institution, foisted into God's Worship. To this, I say, I shall add thus much: That seeing God hath Commanded us to Sing with the Understanding, which must needs be, not in the *Hebrew*, but the *English* Tongue; and he gives us no Direction concerning the Tune, wherein we must Sing. By this 'tis apparent, 'tis best to our own choice, so that we transgress not against that general Direction, given in the Word, *Let all things be done decently, and in Order.* An *English* Psalm may, doubtless, have an *English* Tune, so that it be grave, decent, and comely; not lite, wanton, or frothy; but such as becomes so Holy a Majesty, and is suitable to so grave a Matter. It appears plainly by *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, and others, that in their Times, *David*'s Psalms were put into Songs, for their Edification; and *Eusebius* Reports of some rejecting those, used such Songs in the Church, as would make Men afraid to hear them. The *Jews*, 'tis confessed, had their peculiar Tunes,

Tunes, and Accents; either ſet down by the Penman, or added by the Singer; but theſe are hid from us, and I ſuppoſe, fully known by no man Living; and the little that remains cannot be accommodated to our *Engliſh* Verſion: And therefore ſeeing that God hath given us a Language different from theirs, and ſuffered us to ſerve him with words different from the words they ſerved him with. So likewiſe hath he giveu us Tunes and Tones different from theirs, and no doubt, will accept of them at our hands. Every Nation and Language hath ſome proper and peculiar Dialect of their own, and yet God accepts of all where the Heart is right: And as he hath given us Liberty to Pray to him in our own words, which we may gather from the Anſwers, and Returns which many have of their Prayers. So likewiſe, no doubt, he will accept of our Praiſes, in our own Tunes; which appears alſo by the Refreſhings, which many have found in this Duty. God himſelf hath appointed the ſubſtance of his Worſhip, and left the Circumſtances to Humane Determination; he hath Commanded the Preaching of the Word, but for the Time, and Place, and other Circumſtances, he determined not. In the Paſſeover, he appoints what Meat to eat, but left it to their own choice, whether to drink Wine, or water, or any other Liquor. So ſinging of Pſalms are appointed by him, but in what Tune, he doth not determine, any further than the general Directions, of *decently, and in Order* reach. *Hebrew* Tunes, as I ſaid, are much unknown; and if known, cannot agree with our Language; no more do ours with other Languages. Now, if we ſing, it muſt be in ſome Tune, but no Tune being peculiarly Com-

manded; our own, no doubt, may be Lawfully uſed. Neither can it be juſtly called an innovation thruſt into God's Worſhip, any more than the Word Tranſlated out of the Original into *Engliſh*, in which the Scriptures are Read; yet this is held to be Lawful. 'Tis Invention indeed, which ſavours of nothing but of the Wit, or Will of Man, thruſt into God's Service, and is not agreeable to the Rule, this may be ſuſpected, and rejected; but this is not of that Nature: The Queſtion before us, is, what Reaſon can be given why we may not uſe *Engliſh* Tunes, as well as *Engliſh* Words, in God's Worſhip; ſeeing the one is as Conſonant to Scripture, and Reaſon, as the other. Another ſcruple that ſome make upon the like ground, is, the reading of the Pſalm, in Order to ſinging. Indeed, were all men able to repeat the Pſalms without Book; or had all thoſe, to whom ſinging is a Duty, the gift of Reading; or were furniſhed with Books to Read, this were not neceſſary; but till this comes to paſs, which will never be, Reading is of uſe; the whole Congregation is to ſing, and unleſs all were thus Qualified, how can they ſing, if it be not read? Nature it ſelf dictates to us, we muſt uſe means to bring to the end, and the Scripture never denies it. Now, this is a good means for Inſtruction, and why may we not receive Inſtruction by the Ear, in Hearing, as well as by the Eye, in Reading. In Prayer, we think it more convenient to joyn with the Miniſter, hearing him, than if we could read the ſame Prayer along with him in a Book. When all *Iſrael* ſang together with *Moſes*, it is like it was read to them, *Exod.* 15. 1, 2, *&c.* for doubtleſs, all had not Copies of it, if they could have

have read, neither had committed it to Memory. Neither can the Reading of it any way hinder the Melody, neither will it hinder, but help the Understanding, neither any way dull the Affections: And thus I hope I have removed those Objections, and Answered the doubts of those that scruple this Ordinance.

6. *Direct.* If thou art now convinc'd, that Singing Psalms is a Gospel Duty; yea, thy Duty, which God requires of thee, set upon it then with hopes of Success; but be sure to observe, that in this, as well as in other Duties, thy End be good; otherwise the Action must needs be bad. Many a man loseth much Labour, and pains, and spends much Time to little purpose; an evident Example we have in the *Pharisees*, *Mat.* 6. 1, 2, &c. who Fasted, Prayed, and gave Alms; all Excellent Duties: But those Sacrifices, though otherwise good, being mixt with the Dung of their own self-seeking, and desire of popular applause, God throws it back into their Faces, as Dung, without a Reward; and so it will be with thee, if thou seek thy self, and not God, in the Duty: If Custom, Credit, or a desire of Popular Applause, drive thee on to this Duty, and not the sincere desire of God's Glory, thou maist expect thy Reward from Men, and not from God. Many Men in Singing Psalms, aim at no higher End, nor make any better use of it, than they do in their Prophane Songs, or Ungodly Ballads, *viz.* Their own Recreation, to drive away the Time, or a desire to be Applauded for their good Voice, or Tune, or Excellent gift in Singing. But the chief End which every Christian should aim at in all his Actions, especially in all his Acts of Divine Worship, should be

be God's Glory, and his own Souls good; if this be laid aside, thou maist expect a Curse, and not a Blessing upon thy proceedings. If this be wanting, the Duty is spoyled; if this be minded, God will accept of it, though accompanied with many Imperfections. This Heavenly Duty is performed to this End, by the Angels, and the whole Church Triumphant, as before is shewed, and will be the Work of Eternity; and here upon Earth, if Heart and Voice go together: 'Tis a resemblance of Heaven, and represents, though darkly, that Melodious Harmony that is in Heaven, amongst those Glorious Choristers. We should make Melody in our Hearts, and not only with our Mouths. Look upon it as a part of God's Worship, and Service, and appointed for Spiritual Consolation, not for Prophane Recreation; and therefore we should, with the *Psalmist*, say, *Not unto us, Lord; not to us, but to thine own Name be the Glory.* Let us work for God, and he will not fail to give us a Reward; and there is great Reason why we should in this Duty Trumpet out his Praise, for all we have is his, and from his hand it is we receive every good and perfect gift: We have our Life, and Being from him, and have no more breath than what he puts into us; and there is all the Reason we should render to him the Praises due for all: And this is one way we have to Praise him, *Eph.* 5. 19. *Col.* 3. 16. Thus the Holy Men of Old have gone before us, and aimed at this very End. Thus *Deborah*, and *Barak*; *Moses*, and *Miriam*, and many more; and thus *David* resolves to do, *Psal.* 7. 17. *I will Sing praise to the Name of the Lord most High*, Psal. 111. 1. And exhorts others to follow his Example, *Psal.* 30. 4.

Sing

Sing unto the Lord, O ye Saints of his, &c. *Psal.* 47. 6. & 92. 1. Now, this Duty, though it especially concerns the Godly, as those that have received the most, and greatest Mercies, and have the greatest abilities for the Work; yet others also having received all they have from God, are also obliged to render Praise, and Thanks to God, and are frequently called upon, thus to do, *Psal.* 110. 1. where all Nations are excited to this Duty. And as God's Glory is chiefly to be minded, so our own Benefit is not to be neglected, and our Souls good. And the Psalms serve also for Instruction, and Direction; for this, as well as other Scripture, serves to this End, *Eph.* 5. 19. *Col.* 3. 16. And if we observe, every Psalm will yield us some profitable Instruction, Direction, or Exhortation; and inform us in many things concerning God's Word; his Attributes, Providences, Promises, Word, and Works; or something concerning our selves, or others; good, or bad; concerning this Life, or that to come: And this we may not only Treasure up in our own Hearts, but also press it upon others, and Teach one another in *Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs.* Nay, wicked Men may hence be Instructed, Convinced, and Reproved; to this End, *Moses* Song was Indited, *Deut.* 31. 19. 'Tis matter of Consolation also to the Godly in all Conditions; here are Petitions put up to God, here are Promises made by God: Perform this Duty now to right Ends, and doubt not of a Blessing.

7. *Direct.* If thou wouldst have a Blessing of God accompanying this Ordinance; or, if thou wouldst Sing Psalms profitably, then do it in God's way, as well as to a right End; 'tis not the bare per-

performance of the Duty will serve the turn. Many content themselves with the Husk, without the Kirnel, and think a little Lip-labour sufficient; and come with no more Reverence, nor so much, into God's Presence, than they would come into a great Mans Presence, to Sing a Prophane Song. If such Service would please, God would have many Servants. But 'tis the Heart that God requires, or he will have none of their Service. Trust not, therefore, with the Papist, *Opere Operato*, in the Work done, for God must have it done in his own way, or he will not accept it. A good Duty may be spoyled by the ill doing it, as well as a good Tool by ill handling. The Duty we Treat of is not so easie, as many think it is: Many carelessly performing it, and finding little benefit by it, have mistrusted the Duty, rather than themselves; like the Maid in *Pliny*, that being suddenly struck Blind in the Night, blames the Sun the next Morning for not Rising. Men are apt to accuse any thing; yea, God himself, rather than themselves: Because they themselves feed upon the Husks, they think there is none that taste the Kirnel; and so lay it aside, and plead against it. But upon the same grounds many of them plead themselves above Ordinances, and rest not, till they plead perfection; and look upon Ordinances as beggarly rudiments; but to leave these to their self-delusion. When thou approacheſt to God in this Ordinance, being part of his Instituted Worship, be sure to bring thy Heart along with thee, and ingage it in the Duty. God saith of the Heart, as sometimes *Joseph* did of his Brother *Benjamin*; you shall not see my Face, if your Brother *Benjamin* be not with you: You shall not see his Face, if the

the Heart be absent. Heart and Voyce must joyn together, or it will make no pleasing Melody in the Ears of God: *He is a Spirit, and must be Worshipped in Spirit and in Truth.* For, as Fervent Prayer may prevail, where cold Petitions are denyed: So hearty Praises are acceptable, when others are esteemed but as a mocking of God. We must sing with the Affection, and with the Understanding also: The whole bent of the Soul must be set upon the work; the Blind, and the Lame, and the Heartless Sacrifice is abominable unto God. My Son, saith he, *Give me thy Heart.* Whatever thou offerest without the Heart, he will have none of it: The more of the Heart is in the Duty, the better he loves it. Thou must sing with the Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. Thus *David*, when he began to sing, lift up, not only his Voyce, but his Soul to God, *Psal.* 25. 1. and calls upon all that is within him to bless the Lord, *Psal.* 103. 1. And we have Exhortations to this Duty, *Col.* 3. 18. *Eph.* 5. 19. The Lowing of an Ox, the Grunting of a Hog, make as Melodious an Harmony in God's Ears as a Heartless Prayer, or Praise. God is a Spirit, and must be Worshipped in Spirit, and in Truth: Nay, it must not be only with the Heart, but with the Heart rightly Qualified: An ungracious Heart cannot but savour strong in the Nostrils of God, worse than a stinking Carrion doth in ours: we must sing with Grace in our Hearts, as the former Scriptures plainly testifie. Sincerity is necessary; approach not near him, without the Wedding-Garment: Hypocrisie spoyls all thy best Actions; we may as well expect sweet Water in a dirty Channel, or stinking puddle, as a good Duty from a rotten Heart. The Graces of the Spirit must

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adorn that Soul, that must be welcom into God's presence. Neither is it sufficient, that they be there in the Habit, but they must be drawn forth into the Act; for, as we must Pray, and Sing with the Understanding, and Affection, so we must Pray, and Sing with Faith, believing those Promises made by God, and those Petitions put up, that they shall be in Time Answered. Bring Hope along also, to wait for the Accomplishment, and Love to God, and Delight in his Service, and desire of his Glory, and other suitable Graces: And thus doing, expect a Blessing upon the Ordinance, and benefit by it.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Directions in Obſerving the Sabbath Day.

THE next Duty I ſhall Treat of, is the Obſervation of the Sabbath Day, for this alſo is a Commanded Duty; this is that ſtated time for the Worſhip of God, and neceſſary for his Service. For if we muſt Worſhip God in ſome place, ſo ſome time is alſo required for this Worſhip: and God himſelf hath appointed out what he thinks moſt ſuitable, *Exod.* 20. 8. *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it Holy*, &c. Yea, he hath enjoyned it to be obſerved upon pain of Death, *Exod.* 35. 2. *Whoſoever doth work therein ſhall be put to Death.* And we read of the Man, that gathering ſticks upon that Day, was by God's ſpecial Command to be put to Death, *Numb.* 15. 32. *&c.* But there are many that eaſily grant, it was a Duty obliging the *Jews*, but not the *Gentiles*; and is of no force at preſent to Chriſtians, but Ceremonious, and ſo aboliſhed with the Ceremonial Law; but for Satisfaction know, ſomething in the Command was Ceremonial, and that ceaſeth; ſomething Moral, and that remaineth. Nature it ſelf teacheth us that there is a God; and the ſame Nature teacheth, that this God is to be Worſhipped; and Reaſon tells us, ſome time muſt be alotted for this Worſhip: God appoints one day of ſeven, for this Work, and that is Moral; but what ſeventh day, whether from the Creation, or no,

is

is left to God to determine. Many that know not the true God, yet alot some time for the Worship of their Imagined Deities; but that it must be this, or that day, Nature teaches not, but is alterable at God's dispose, but not at Mans; and that it was observed in Remembrance of their deliverance from *Egypt*, was Ceremonial, *Deut.* 5. 15. And Typified out a deliverance by Christ, a Rest in him, and his Resting in the Grave. As also the rigid Observation of it, enjoyned to the *Jews*, when they must not go out of their places, kindle a Fire, dress any Meat, bear any burthen, *&c.* upon it. Christian Liberty hath freed us from this; but for the Observation of one day in seven, for God's Service, is Commanded by God, approved by Christ, and practised by the Apostles, and all succeeding Generations, 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. and what power on Earth, then can make it void? It was a Law given to *Adam* in Paradice, before there was any Ceremony used, or enjoyned, or any Saviour needed, or promised. I say, for the Substance of it, though it was afterwards prest more strictly, and some Ceremonies added to the *Jews*; and therefore it belongeth to all his Posterity, though the Ceremonial part concerned them only; and though we read not that it was Observed in those first Ages, yet it follows not, that it was not, when many thousand things then done could not be expressed in so short a History: Yea, the same seems to be known to the *Jews* before the Law was given, *Exod.* 16. 23, &c. *To Morrow is the Rest of the Holy Sabbath*, &c. When it was after that God gave it in the Command; and if this Rest upon the seventh day be Ceremonious, why not the Command of Labour on the six other

days

days also? And why doth not this cease to be a Duty as well as the other, and then the idlest Persons may be the best Christians? We may find this Command reaches even to the stranger that is within the Gates, when I think the Ceremonies are not prest upon them. Many Reasons also are given in the Command, which belong to us, as well as to the *Jews*, as from the Equity of it: God, who is the Disposer of all, gives us Six days, and reserves one to himself, which he calls his own; *The Sabbath of the Lord thy God*: And Christ tells us, *The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath*; and from his own Example; he Rested, and therefore Commands us to Rest; the End was, to Worship God in it, and to Dedicate it to his Service, for the Resting of Man and Beast upon it; and distinguishing his People from others, *&c.* and doth not this concern us as well as the *Jews*? God requires no less proportion of Service now, than he did then, and therefore no less time to do it in. Our Bodies require as much Rest as theirs, and our Souls as much Food; and why should not we have the like time? And this being the Substance of the Fourth Command, I think neither Man, nor Angel, can alter it; for who can proportion it better than God himself? Nay, the Circumstances in the delivering of this Law, shews to be Moral. It was spoken by God's Mouth, as well as the other; written by the same Finger of God, in the same Tables of Stone, put into the Ark, where the Ceremonies were

not; it hath a special *Memento* put upon it: *Remember the Sabbath, to keep it Holy.* Christ himself owns it, when he bids the *Jews* Pray that their Flight be not in the Winter, nor on the Sabbath day, *Mat.* 24. 20. which Flight was forty Years after his Death. The opposition which wicked Men make against it, proves it to be of God also; for if the Devil herein prevail, we might almost bid farewel to all our Religion.

1. *Direct.* Before thou canst make Conscience of Observing the Sabbath, thou must be well convinc'd that it is thy Duty. To this End I have already proved it to be of Divine Institution, and a Branch of the Moral Law; binding, not only *Jews*, but Christians also. But I fore-see one main rub must be removed, before the way be cleared; that doubt which makes many to stumble: Whether the first day of the Week, or that which we call the Christian Sabbath, be of Divine Institution; and whether Christians be obliged to observe it as a Sabbath. Much hath been Written by Divines to satisfie this doubt: My purpose is not to speak much to it in this place, this Treatise being of another Nature, yet something is necessary; for while this doubt remains, who will make use of the following Directions? 'Tis true, we cannot prove in Scripture, neither is it said, *totidem verbis*, that Christ did Command that the Sabbath should be changed, from the last, to the first day of the week, then there could be no Controversie; but we have

have that which is equivalent to such a Command, that it was changed by Divine Authority, and very probably by Christ himself; the Scripture yields us sufficient Witness Christ is called the Lord of the Sabbath, and the Holy Ghost calls it his day, *Rev.* 1. 10. which seems to intimate, he is the Author of it: As the Sacrament is called his Supper, because he Instituted it; and had it not been altered by him, I know not who would have been so bold, to have distinguished it from other days by this Name; he was every way as Faithful in his House as *Moses* was, yet *Moses*, we know, by God's appointment, stated a time for God's Worship, *Heb.* 3. 2. 6. and no doubt, a settled time is as necessary for us, as for them, to Serve God in. We find Christ himself owning the day in his own Person; as in his Resurrection, and finishing the work of our Redemption, a greater work than that of Creation, and better deserves a special Memorial: And the Apostle tells us, *He entred into his Rest, and ceased from his own Work, as God did from his*, Heb. 4. 10. aluding to the Creation, from which, when God Rested, he Ordained the Sabbath. We may also Read, that Christ, after his Resurrection, appeared divers times to his Disciples upon the first day of the Week, when they were met together; Read *John* 2. 19. and again, *verse* 26. And doubtless, not without Divine Providence pointing out this day to us; and after his Ascention, when they were met together upon

that day, he pours out the Holy Ghost upon them, *Acts* 2. 12. We Read also, that this was the day the Apostles did keep as a Sabbath, and also the Churches met together to perform Sabbath days duties; to Preach the Word, to Administer the Sacraments, Prayer, Works of Charity, *&c. Acts* 20. 7. 1 *Cor.* 18. 2. *Upon the first day of the Week let every one of you lay by in store, as God hath prospered him* And as 'tis conceived, forty Years after Christs Decease, Saint *John*, by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, calls it the Lord's day, whereupon he received his Revelation, *Rev.* 1. 10. Neither do we Read, that the Apostles ever kept any other day, as a Sabbath; 'tis true indeed, upon the *Jews* Sabbath they often Preached, taking Advantage of the Multitude then gathered together, which Advantage at other times they wanted. Now, if the change were thus made by Christ, and his Apostles, it was by the directions of the Spirit of God; for the Apostles delivered but what they had received from God, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23. It was upon this day they met to Preach, and break Bread, *Acts* 20. 7. 1 *Cor.* 16. 1, 2. Now, were there no Precept, the constant Example of the Apostles, and Churches in the Apostles time, may satisfie us, for they were Inspired by the Spirit of God, and appointed them both by Doctrine, and Example to Teach his Church; and to this End gave them Instructions in the time between his Resurrection, and Ascention, which Instructions are not all Recorded; yea,

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the constant practice of the Church in all Ages since the Apostles time, give us no little Light; for though Christians have been at great difference among themselves about other matters, yet few questioned the change of the day; both *Greeks* and *Latines*, both *Papists* and *Protestants*, both *Lutherans* and *Calvenists*, hold to this, and God's Blessing upon their Endeavours is great encouragement; he would never succeed them in so sinful a Course, were it such; nay, the remarkable Judgments of God upon Sabbath-breakers, bespeakes God for the Author, for none in the World could Lawfully have done it without him. Thus I have shewn you, I hope, sufficient grounds to Build upon; I proceed now to Direct you to keep it as a Sabbath.

2. *Direct.* If thou wouldst Faithfully Sanctifie the Sabbath, as God Commands thee, make preparation for it before it come; for there is hardly any thing of great Concernment well done without some preparation, and much more here: we prepare the Body for Physick, before we take it; we provide in Summer for Winter, and lay in Provision in Harvest; we prepare in the Day for the Night, and work when we have the Light: We prepare in Health for Sickness, and in Youth for Age: And were we to appear before some great Man, we should make preparation accordingly; and shall we only be wanting in the Service of our Lord, and Master, and rush into his Presence without prepared Hearts?

God bids us remember the Sabbath day, to keep it Holy, or to Sanctifie it, as 'tis, *Deut.* 5. 12. The word Remember, signifies either to call to mind something past, or to commit to Memory something for the Future, and both are necessary to this business. God sets this *Memento* upon it, to Teach us, that those that will keep it well, when it is come, must Remember it before it come, or otherwise our Nature is so Corrupt, that it will take hold upon some Occasion or other to draw us aside from the Duty in hand: We can fore-cast for Fairs, and Markets, sometimes long before, and make preparations for them according to our needs, whether to buy or sell: We consider our wants to have them supplyed, and make preparations accordingly; and yet how few make preparation for the Market day for the Soul. Many tire themselves in the Labours of their Calling in the Week days, and then use the Lord's day no otherwise than a Beast, only Rest from their Labours; for their Spirits being spent, and their Bodies tyred, they are more fit for sleep, than any Holy Duty; and rushing rudely out of the World, into the Service of God, they bring so much of the world with them, that it renders them incapable of any Spiritual Duty. But thy Care should be, to sequester thy Heart, Thoughts, and Affections from the world, and set them upon God; and empty thy Heart of worldly Cares, and Troubles, that thou maist mind the business God sets thee about. The want

of this is one Cause why Men get so little benefit by the Ordinances; and hear so much, and profit so little, because they come not with empty Hearts; a full Vessel can receive no more, when the Prophet multiplied the Widdows Oyl, when there was no more empty Vessels, the Oyl stayed: When the Head and Heart are full of the World, this Water of Life will run over. But our Duty is to prepare the Heart for so great a work, as the Entertaining our Lord, and Master, the great God of Heaven and Earth, who invites himself to Sup with us: He is the Searcher of the Heart, and the Tryer of the Reins. Before the Sabbath come, use such fore-sight, diligence, and Meditation; and dispose, and seasonably dispatch thy Worldly business, that thou maist be more free, and fit for the Duties of the day. We find *Israel* did thus prepare to Sanctifie the Sabbath, *Exod.* 16. 22. and gathered *Manna* enough the day before; and this was usual among the *Jews*, *Luke* 23. 54. *And that day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.* Thus *Nehemiah* prepared against the Sabbath, that it should not be prophaned, *Nehem.* 13. 19. And Gods Example in this is binding to us; he finished his works before, and so should we, and should not meddle with any unnecessary Worldly business then, either with Hand, or Heart, that our Duties be not pestered with the World; but that we may be as free to serve the Lord, if possible, as if we had no worldly business to

look to; but many fore-cast business for that day, or make it necessary through their former neglects; but this will appear to be their Sin, and their Folly. *Solomon* bids us *look well to our Feet*, viz. our Affections, *when we go into the House of God*, Eccl. 5. 1. And 'tis good to consider whose Presence we come into; and, with Holy *David*, wash our Hands in Innocency, before we compass his Altars, *Psal.* 26. 6. Examine how the Case stands between God and thy Soul, and venture not into his Presence in an unregenerate Condition, or having sin unmortified, or unrepented of, lest he break thee in pieces, and there be none to deliver thee. Consider what sin thou hast Committed, especially in the week past, and be humbled for them; lay aside thy worldly business betime on the Eve; when others only sweep their Houses, do thou sweep thy Heart: Set some time apart for Reading, Meditating, Conferring, Instructing thy Family, and Praying with them; reconcile the Differences, if there be any in the Family; between Husband and Wife, Parent and Child, Master and Servant; yea, Neighbour and Neighbour, that your Prayers be not hindred; for God can hardly be well served, where the Members of a Family Live at Discord. In a word, prepare thy Heart to meet God the day following.

3. *Direct.* Wouldst thou Sanctifie the Sabbath? Take heed thou do nothing that is unlawful upon that day. This is appointed by God

God for a day of reſt; and not only, as ſome ſay, from ſin, which ſhould be Committed no day, but alſo from Labour, which at other times is Lawful, the works of our Calling; yea, unneceſſary recreations are forbidden, *Exod.* 20. 10. *In it thou ſhalt do no manner of Work, thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter; thy Man-Servant, nor thy Maid-Servant, thy Cattle, nor the Stranger that is within thy Gates.* Jer. 17. 21,22. *Neither do ye any work, but Hallow the Sabbath day,* &c. Neither will a bare ceſſation from work ſerve the turn, for reſt is Commanded for an Higher End, that we might ſerve God with more Freedom; and therefore Idleneſs is a ſin worſe than Bodily Labour, upon that day; and when Men uſe not reſt as a means, but as an End, 'tis an egregious breach of the Fourth Command; and 'tis a groſs miſtake to think, that is an acceptable Duty, on that day, which is a great ſin any day. He that keeps the Sabbath only by reſting from his Labour, keeps it but as a Bruit Beaſt; yet the moſt of Men ſpend great part of the day in Idleneſs, or what is worſe; and think, if they give God their Bodily Preſence for an hour, or two, it's ſufficeable; but God will not be mocked: we ſhould think it were an unprofitable Servant that would work but two or three hours in the day. God gives us ſix whole days for our work, and ſhall not we give him one whole one for his? well, reſt we muſt from our Labour, but that is not all; we muſt ſpend it in God's Service: we muſt forbear

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our work, that we may do his, and beware of all that hinders us; and that is not only our work, but our pleasures and recreations, works of our Calling we are forbidden, and that upon pain of Death, *Exod.* 31. 15. *He that doth any work upon it shall surely be put to Death:* And God meant as he spake, we find that he Commanded the man that gathered sticks on the Sabbath day to be put to Death, and he was stoned, *Numb.* 15. 36. And there is great reason, for how can a man serve God, when Heart and Hand, when his Thoughts and Affections are intangled in the world? How can he serve two Masters, but he must sleight the one? when the Body is indisposed by Labour, how can the Heart be free? And God Commands the Heart; My Son, give me thy Heart. Neither will he have a divided Heart, he will have all, or none; and he Commands not only our selves, but also our Children, and Servants; yea, even the Bruit Beasts to rest from their Labour, that our Hearts may be the freer, and there be no occasion for roving thoughts, and to avoid distraction in God's Service. Recreations also, except those that are purely necessary, are also forbidden, even those which are at other times Lawful; sports and pastimes are no less dangerous than work; yea, much more, for they draw away the Heart more than honest Labour. *Augustine thought it was more Lawful to Plough on the Lord's day, than to Dance*; but many of our wanton Youth are of another mind; but the one

one brings Profit, the other oft tends to the debauching of Youth: And doubtless, God himself hath forbidden these vain pastimes, *Isa.* 58. 13. *If thou turn thy Feet from the Sabbath, doing thy Pleasure on my Holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the Holy of the Lord, Honourable, and shalt Honour him; not doing thy own ways, nor finding thy own Pleasures, nor speaking thy own words,* &c. Worldly and vain Discourse you see is also here forbidden; for every moment of this precious time should, if possible, be improved to a Spiritual use; our own words should not be spoken, our own pleasure should not be sought, worldly cares & fears should that day be banished the mind, for these distract a Man in the Service of God: *These are the Thorns that choak the Word, and it becometh unfruitful*, Mat. 13. 22. Indeed, distracting, carking Cares, are always unlawful, much more in recourse to God himself; but provident Cares at other times a Duty, now become a Sin, and must be laid aside as much as may be, that the Heart may be free; we read in Scripture of many sorts of work forbidden: As Jornying upon the Lords day, but only to the Ordinance called, a Sabbath days Journey, *Exod.* 16. 29. for this distracts the mind as well as work: Let them look to it, that use that time to Ride to Fairs, or Markets, *Acts* 1. 12. Buying and Selling is also forbidden, *Nehem.* 13. 16, 17. See how zealous he was against it; but 'tis a practice too much in Fashion. Carrying of Burdens is also

forbidden, upon no less Cruelty than the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, Jer. 17. 22. Nehem. 13. 19. In a word, whatsoever hinders in God's Service; nay, doth not some way or other further it, cannot be Justified: As for dressing of Meat or Drink, any further than is necessary, or convenient; or spending over-much time in Bed, or needless Dressing, or spending time any ways unnecessarily, is no doubt, a Sin.

4. *Direct.* Though there be a Rest Commanded by God, and a Cessation from the works of our Calling, upon the Sabbath day; yet all works are not forbidden thereupon, there is still Liberty given for good works: for works are forbidden as they tend to the distraction of the mind, and hinder us in the Service of God; but those works that further it, are not only Lawful, but Commanded; these in general are works of Piety, works of Charity, and works of Necessity: Works of Piety are such as tend to the Worship and Service of God, as part of it, or as a means or help thereunto. Thus it was Lawful for the Priests under the Law to kill and Sacrifice the Beasts that were to be Offered, which was a servile work, and unlawful, had it not been Commanded, *Mat.* 12. 5. *Have you not read in the Law, how on the Sabbath days the Priests in the Temple prophane the Sabbath, and are blameless.* And no doubt, 'tis Lawful in Gospel Times for Ministers to Preach the Word, Catechize, and Personally to Instruct the People, though it be

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to the spending of their Spirits, and the Tyring of their Bodies, more than on any other day of the week: *Paul* he Preached long, even till mid-night, upon that day: And 'tis Lawful for him to Travel that day to the Meeting place; and 'tis Lawful for the People also to come to hear: Yea, 'tis their Duty, though it be several Miles, if they cannot otherwise enjoy it: We read of a Sabbath days Journey, *Acts* 1. 12. which is conceived to be about two Miles. We may see this was a Custom in *Israel*, 2 *Kings* 4. 23. when the good *Shunammite* desired her Husbands leave to go to the Prophet; he answered her, wherefore wilt thou go to him to day, it is neither New Moon, nor Sabbath; implying these were usual times to go, *Psal.* 84. 7. Every one of them in *Sion* appeareth before God. Works of Mercy also are necessary, whether to Man, or Beasts; God desires Mercy, and not Sacrifice, *Hos.* 6. 6. Now, this Mercy is either to the Soul, or to the Body: To the Body, visiting the Sick, healing their Diseases, easing their pains, relieving their Necessity, if able; this is approved by Christ, *Luke* 13. 11. when Christ healeth the Sick, and disputes the Case with the *Pharisees*; yea, giving, or gathering Alms upon that day, which we find was the Apostles Command, and the Churches practice, 1 *Cor.* 16. 1, 2. and that which Christ will Reward at the last, *Mat.* 25. 35. Meat and Drink also must be taken moderately, for the refreshing of thy Body, and the making it fit for

for the Service of the day. Christ himself approves of this, when he justifies his Disciples for plucking the Ears of Corn, *Mat.* 12. 1, 2. Spiritual Mercy must be shewed also; such is informing the Ignorant, reducing the Erroneous, exhorting the Negligent, comforting the Disconsolate, Instructing one another in our most Holy Faith, Reconciling those that are at variance; yea, the Bruit Beasts themselves must that day taste of thy bounty; if one be fallen into a Ditch or Pitt, we must lift him out, *Luke* 14. 5. We may, yea, must loose our Ox and our Ass from the Stall, and lead them out to water, upon that day, *Luke* 13. 15. Physitians, in cases of necessity, may Travel, to Visit their sick Patients, and Midwives attend upon their Office; but it should be Charity, and Necessity, and not for filthy Lucre, that this should be done. We should not sell our Labour upon that day, but do it for common Charity; otherwise a just Cause may to us prove sinful. Works of Necessity also are Lawful, so they be truly so, and not feigned: when an House is on Fire, we may leave the Ordinance, to seek to Quench it, though with Bodily Labour. The Marriner, in his Journey, must attend his work, but his Heart in the mean time should be in Heaven: The Souldier, if set upon, should defend himself; we find *Joshua* compassing *Jericho* seven days together, *Josh.* 6. 15. and one of them must needs be the Sabbath. Though the *Jews* at first did scruple Fighting upon that day, and many

many of them were Murdered by the Enemy; yet at last they resolved to Fight in their own Defence, 2 *Mac.* 4. 1. A Husband-man, in Harvest time, I suppose, for fear of an Inundation, or the apparent loss of Grain, or Hey, may Labour to prevent it; but take heed a Necessity be not feigned: Many are necessitated for want of fore-cast, and some fore-cast, that there may be a Necessity, neglecting it all the week, and then say, must not Cattle be looked? Or such a thing be done? But know what may be done before, or let alone till after, ought not to be done; 'tis not thy wilful neglect can procure a dispensation to break God's Law; but most men strain their Christian Liberty to the utmost Link, but take heed of going beyond; be not deceived, God will not be mocked.

5. *Direct.* To the sanctifying of the Sabbath, thou must not only observe an Holy Rest unto the Lord all the day, and forbear thy own thoughts, words, and works, as formerly I have shewed; but there are also many Duties of Religion to be performed; as part of that Worship to be given to God, upon that day, that the whole time, as nigh as may be, may be spent in the Religious Exercises of the day. Now, the Duties required, are either Publick, or Private; the Publick are in the Congregation of the Saints, when the Church meets together to Worship God. The Private are in the Family, or in the Closet: He that only rests from his Labour on the Sabbath,

Sabbath, keeps it no better; yea, much worse than a Beast. Idleness is a sin at all times, especially then; this is the Market day to lay in Provision for the week following, the Harvest, to provide in, for winter, and shall we Trifle now? All Time is precious, much more this; we should leave any work undone before we should leave God's work undone, or carelessly do it. The Publick Duties required at our hands, are according to the Relations we stand in; more is required of Publick Persons, than of Private. The Ministers are God's Stewards to dispence his Mysteries, to Divide the word of God aright, and to give every one his Portion; and therefore he must look to his Charge, and make preparation before-hand for his work. He is the Mouth of the People unto God, and God's Mouth to them; and therefore he had need to set a watch over his Lips, that he Offend not with his Tongue. Parents and Masters they should not only come to the Ordinance themselves, but bring their Children, and Servants there to be Taught. Prayer is an Ordinance of God, and should be performed in the Publick, where Minister and People should joyn together to make their Requests known to God in the Name of Christ; and beg such things as are necessary for themselves, or others; for this Life, or that to come: It should be performed with Faith and Fervency, with Humility and Reverence, with Wisdom and Discretion, both by Minister and People: [illegible] Com-

plements with God are unsavoury, and unseemly. The Word also should be Read, and Preached by the Minister, and the whole Counsel of God made known, *Acts* 20. 20. 27. and that without mixture of Humane Invention; without Ostentation, Plainly, Faithfully, Powerfully, Truly, Zealously. And the People they should hear with Attention, Diligence, Watchfulness, Understanding, and Care; they should Examine that which is delivered by the Minister, whether it be agreeable to the Truth, like those Noble *Bereans*, *Acts* 17. 11. They should Treasure it up in good Hearts, and bring forth good Fruit in their Lives and Conversations; for without Practice knowledge is little worth. The Administration of Baptism also is a Sabbath days work; *Upon the Sabbath*, says Christ, *they Circumcise a Man*; this is given the Minister in Commission, *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. which is to be done according to Precept, and Scripture Examples, without External Additions, and the People ought to be present at it, and joyn with the Minister in Prayer for a Blessing, and not turn their backs upon it through carelessness or contempt. The Sacrament of the Supper also should be as frequently Administred, as Convenience will permit, *Acts* 2. 42. And 'tis the Ministers Duty to Teach and Instruct the Ignorant, to convince the gain-sayers, reclaim the scandalous, if they can; and if they will not be Reformed, to keep them back from the Sacrament; yea, to take Christ's

way: And if they be obstinate, cast them out, and not suffer the Ordinance to be polluted, or contemned. God complains of the contrary, *Ezek.* 22. 26. *Her Priests have violated my Law, and have prophaned my Holy things, they have put no difference between the Holy and Prophane*, &c. And 'tis Christ's command, *not to give Holy things to Dogs*, Mat. 7. 8. The People they should partake of it, and come with prepared Hearts to this Holy Banquet, and be careful that they have on the Wedding Garment, or they will be no welcom Guests to his Marriage Supper: They should there Exercise their Graces of Knowledge, Faith, Love, and Obedience, *&c.* knowing that the neglect, or unworthy receiving is a dangerous sin, *Acts* 20. 6. 1 *Cor.* 11. 17. Singing of Psalms also is a publick Duty, and should be performed by the whole Church, and in so doing, they shonld lift up their Hearts, as well as their Voices, and Sing with the Spirit, and with the Understanding also. Visiting the Sick, relieving the Poor, Gathering, and Collecting for them, is this days Duty, 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. Catechizing, especially the Younger sort, is the Ministers Duty; and 'tis the Peoples Duty to send them: And all this must be done to God's Glory, and the Edification of our selves and others.

6. *Direct.* Though the publick Worship and Service of God be chiefly to be minded, and intended upon the Lord's day, yet it is not only that which is required. Many private Duties

Duties also are to be performed; and in thy Publick and Private Duty is all the whole time to be spent. What those Publick Duties are I have already shewed you, and shall now speak of those that are Private; I mean, such as Private Persons, especially Masters, and Parents, and Governours of Families ought to do: Let the Inferiors also here Read their Duties. Some of those are to be done before the Publick, by way of Preparation; and some after, by way of Digestion: Concerning Preparation I have spoken already, and yet here something may be added; for, as thou must remember the Sabbath before it come, to prepare for it; so when 'tis come, improve it to the best Advantage: And to this End, Rise as timely in the Morning as thy Health will permit. Were it to go to some Market, or Fair, or to do some earnest, or important business, how early wouldst thou Rise? And why not now, the better to fit thy self for thy Masters work; and to Sanctifie as much of the Consecrated time as thou canst, and do God as much work as may be; and Reason good, for God is the best Master, and pays the best Wages; and therefore he should have most work done: And by this means thou wilt redeem the more time for thy private Devotion. When thou first awakest, Consecrate thy first thoughts to God, and begin the day with some Fruitful Meditation, suitable to the Season, and the work in hand, for this will fit thee for after-Duties. But if

thou let the World, or Sin have thy first thoughts, 'tis hard getting them out of possession of thy Heart. Examine thine own Heart, what Graces thou hast weak, or wanting, that thou wouldst have supplyed; what Sins are strong, that thou wouldst have mortified; what sins thou hast Committed, especially the week last; what Mercies thou hast received, that so thy Heart may be affected accordingly; Go to God with shame in thy Face, and sorrow in thy Heart; and, if it may be, with Tears in thine Eyes, and confess thy sins to him, and never rest, till thou hast a discharge. Many give themselves so much Liberty of sleeping in the Morning, that much of those secret Duties are either neglected, or slubbered over, and they have little time to set the Heart in Order. But how can a man expect a Blessing, that is guilty of such neglects? But these secret Duties are not sufficient. If thou hast a Family, call them together, in convenient time, Read some Portion of Holy Scripture to them; and, if thou canst, fasten something upon their Spirits by Familiar Discourse, or otherwise, and then joyn with them in Prayer to God for the pardon of the sins of the Family, and a supply of Grace, and a Blessing upon the Publick Ordinances, for their Souls good: And here forget not to put up some Petitions for him who is to be your mouth unto God, that he might do it prevailingly; and that he that is to be God's mouth to you, may reach your Hearts, and speak a word

word in season to your Souls, and meet with your beloved sins, and put you on to your neglected Duties. If Holy *Paul* desires the Prayers of his Hearers, *Col.* 4. 3. much more need have your Ministers. And having thus disposed thy private Devotions, make timely resort unto the publick: 'Tis an ill Custom which many have, to stay late, and savours but of little Love to the Ordinances. These Men would make more haste to a Feast, or Banquet, perhaps, to a Stage-Play, or Morrice-dance. And when thou hast thus done, and brought thy Family along with thee, behave thy self, and see that they behave themselves gravely, and orderly, and joyn with the Minister; hear attentively, pray zealously, and sing affectionately, and do every Duty chearfully; write the Sermon in thy Book, or in thy Memory, especially the most material Heads; and after the Morning Exercise, use sobriety in Meat and Drink, lest thy Body be surcharged, and become unfit for the Evening Exercise; for though Meat and Drink may be taken, yet no more than fits thee for thy Duty: Spend the inter-mediate-time in Prayer, Singing, Repeating, Meditation, *&c.* and frequent the Evening Exercise as thou didst in the Morning; and when the Publick is done, spend the remaining part of thy time in private Duties; as Repeating the Sermon, and Examining the proficiency of thy People, incouraging the Diligent, reproving the Idle: In Meditation of what thou hast heard, pressing it upon thy

own, and People's Hearts, and put it into Practice, which is the Life of all; without which 'tis like Food eaten, but not digested; which feeds Diseases, and not the Body. Call thy Family together, suffer them not to wander after Vanity: Read some Portion of Holy Writ; and, if it may be, make them understand God's Will in it. Catechize, and Instruct them in the Fundamentals of Religion, Pray with them, and for them, for the Pardon of their sins, and a Blessing upon the means; Commend them, and all thine, and all the *Israel* of God into God's Protection, and so conclude the day in Secret with God as thou beganst; confess the miscarriages of thy Heart, and bless God for the assistance thou hast found; follow this course, and the Sabbath will prove a Market-day for thy Soul.

7. *Direct.* 'Tis not enough to Sanctifie the Sabbath thy self, but God requires thee to improve thy Authority, that those under thy Charge may Sanctifie it also: And if by thy negligence, or remisness thou suffereſt sin to be Committed on it, and wilt not hinder it, it will be laid at thy door, and charged upon thine Account, *qui non prohibet cum potest, Jubet.* Now, this chiefly concerns Superiors, for to them is the Command chiefly directed, *Exod.* 20. 10. They are to Command, and others are to Obey. All Governors therefore, whether Civil, Military, or Ecclesiastical, are hereby obliged to improve their Interest and Authority, to hinder the Prophanation of the Lord's

Lod's day, and to promote the Sanctification of it. It was good *Joshua*'s Resolution, *He and his would Serve the Lord*, Josh. 24. 15. And God himself, who could not be mistaken, saith of *Abraham*, *He knew that he would Command his Children, and Houshold after him, to keep his Commandments*, Gen. 18. 19. The Magistrate is *Custos utrius & Fabulæ*, and therefore should look to it, that the Commands of God be not broken, or Contemned. They should be Nursing Fathers to the Church, and therefore should see that their Children take good ways, and run not into dangers, *Isa.* 49. 23. They are Vice-Gerents upon Earth, and should Act like God, and see his Commands observed; they should encourage the good, and punish the disobedient; they should Reprove, Threaten, Restrain, and Punish the Disobedient, for the Prophaning of the Sabbath; and encourage the good, that it may appear they bear not the Sword in vain. This was *Nehemiah*'s Practice in the same Case, *Nehem.* 13. 15, *&c.* The Fourth Commandment saith as much, which is Directed to Superiors, who have most Power to Reform this amiss. An Example of a Magistrates Power we have in *Josiah*, who Commanded all his Subjects to stand to the Covenant, he had made with the Lord, and made them to Serve the Lord their God; though doubtless, many of them had rather have Served *Baal*, 2 *Chron.* 34. 32, 33. That is, he forc'd them to an outward compliance. We find in many

places, Death is threatned to the Prophanation of this day. Now, if the Magistrate had not Power to punish, as some imagine, who should inflict his Death? Can it be imagined, that God immediately from Heaven struck them dead for every such Transgression? We find indeed, the Law Executed, *Numb.* 15. 36. by the Command of God, upon the man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath, but it was done by the hand of man; though men cannot be compelled to become true Christians, yet they may, and ought to be forc'd to an outward Compliance, and restrained from the open violation of the known Laws of God, though they will not Sanctifie it in their Heart, they should be restrained from Prophaning it with their Hands, or Tongues. False Prophets should not be suffered to deceive the People, and those that Teach Errors and Heresies, should be restrained. But alas! here is our Misery, we have few *Nehemiahs* in our Time, to redress these abuses: Many not only do it themselves, but take Pleasure in those that do; and the Sabbath is Prophaned, and few lay it to Heart. Ministers also in their place should see to the Observation of it, though they cannot compel, yet they may perswade, and denounce the Judgments of God against the wilful breakers of his Law: The Word and Sword should go together; and if they prove obstinate Sinners, they should be cast out, as those that are not fit for a Christian Society; Excommunication hath proceeded,

I suppose, against Persons for less faults in God's Account. Governors of Families also, whether Parents, or Masters, should look to those under their Charge; for neither Son nor Daughter, Man-Servant, nor Maid-Servant, should break this Law; and though they have not the Power of Life and Death, as the Magistrate hath, yet he hath Power to Command, Rebuke, Restrain; and, if need be, to Correct: And why hath God given this Power into their Hands, but to this End? *Abraham*, *Joshua*, *David*, and others, did thus Reform their Families, *Gen.* 18. 19. *Josh.* 24. 15. *Psal.* 101. *throughout*. *Eph.* 6. 4. *Esther* 4. 6. Servants that are of another Religion; as suppose a *Jew*, or a *Mahometan*, yet ought to be restrained from the open Prophanation of it. But alas! many Parents, and Masters will Prophane it themselves, and it cannot be imagined that they will see to their Children, or Servants; yea, often both by Precept, and President, they Command the violation; and many that will not openly Prophane it themselves, yet wink at others when they do it; but cannot God, thinkest thou, discern the thoughts of thy Heart, and see thy approbation of it? Some plead, as *Lot* of *Zoar*, 'tis a little one, 'tis a small matter, the more shame to break a Command of God for a small matter; if the Devil mend thy Wages, thou wilt mend thy Work, and a greater Temptation will make thee break them all, but thou wilt find none so small; some plead a necessity for doing this

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or that, but was it not thy neglect that made it neceſſary? Some plead Youth muſt have ſome Recreation, ſo they muſt have Food and Raiment, ſhall they therefore ſteal for it? Why may they not have it out of thy ſix days, as well as out of God's one? Give them of thy own, and not of anothers time for it.

CHAP. IX.

Directions in Baptiſm.

IN the next place, I ſhall come to Treat of the Sacraments, and give ſome Directions in the right uſe of them, which is a buſineſs of very great Concernment; and the moſt miſcarry, and loſe their Labour that uſe them. I ſhall ſpend a few words concerning Sacraments in general, and then Treat of them ſeverally. A Sacrament is a viſible ſign, and Seal of the Covenant of Grace, Inſtituted, and Ordained by God himſelf, whereby he confirmeth unto the Elect, the free promiſe of the Goſpel; Chriſt, and all his Benefits, and alſo bindeth them unto Obedience to his revealed Will. The Covenant which God made with *Adam* in Paradice, was a Covenant of Works, engaging to perfect Obedience upon pain of Death, and Damnation; do

do this, and Live: And had man continued in Innocency, he had been everlastingly happy upon that Covenant terms. But when by the Instigations of Satan, man had broken this Covenant, and Transgressed that Command, which forbid him to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge, of good and Evil; he lost by this Transgression that Image of God, wherein he was Created, and in the room of it had the Image of Satan stampt upon his Soul; and instead of Original Righteousness, had Original Sin, and his whole Nature was depraved. And after which Fall, it was impossible that he, or any of his Posterity, should ever have been saved upon the first Covenant terms, and lay under a necessity of perishing, if the great God had not found out a way, which Man nor Angel could not have done, to Reconcile sinful Man to himself, by a Mediator; and to this end, sent his own Son, out of his own Bosom, to be made Man, that being God and Man, he might be a fit Mediator between God and Man: Who by his Death and Passion discharged the Debt, bought the Prisoners into his own hands, and enters into a new Covenant with them, even a Covenant of Grace; the Tenor of it is, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*; and unto this Covenant the Sacrament Seals. Now, this Covenant, in the Time of the Law, and in the Time of the Gospel, was one and the same for Substance, though under a different Administration. It was then more dark, and Typical;

Typical; now more clear, and manifest; and even then also God gave them Seals to this Covenant, which were Circumcision, and the Passeover; not that they were needful on God's part, for his Promises are, *Yea, and Amen*; but on Man's part they were, lest being sensible of his own unworthiness, he should doubt, and despair of God's Mercy. Now, in the Time of the Gospel, God altering the Administration (for when the Substance was come, the shadows fled away) he altered the Seals also, and appointed only two, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper: The one for our Entrance into the Church, the other for our growth and nourishment. These, and these only are our Gospel Sacraments; as for these five added by the Papists, they are properly no Sacraments at all; for the Covenant of Grace is not Sealed by them. Some of them want a Divine Institution, some of them have not the Nature of a Sacrament, and a Divine promise is wanting, and therefore a Blessing cannot be expected. Now, Baptism is the first Sacrament of the New Testament, both in regard of Institution, Administration, Order, and Use, and therefore comes first to be Treated of. The word is taken from the *Greeks*, and signifies to wash, or dip, *&c.* and 'tis Attributed in Scripture to many things, but I shall not trouble you with them, only in this place we Treat of it as 'tis a Sacrament of the New Testament, Instituted by Christ, whereby Persons are dipped in, or sprinkled with water,

water, in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and so Dedicated, and Devoted to the Service, and Worship of God; and entred into his Church, and Listed into his Company, his School, and Family, and have all the Blessings, and Benefits of the New Covenant; Christ, and all his Righteousness, Merits, and Graces, Pardon of Sin, Regeneration, Adoption, Sanctification, and Glorification Sealed up to them; for the Water, as it is of a cleansing Nature, signifies the Blood of Christ, which cleanseth us from all Sin. In this Sacrament there is a mutual Covenant made, and ratified between Christ and the Soul; the Soul gives up it self to Christ, promising Obedience to his known Will, and that he will Worship no other god, but Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: And God, for his part, promises Christ, and his Benefits, upon Condition, that Man prove Faithful in his Covenant; and no doubt, God will not fail in his part, if Man perform, which that thou mayst do, take these Directions.

1. *Direct.* Because some Scruples do arise about Baptism, it seems necessary to speak something to them; for those that Question the Ordinance it self, are not like to use the Directions. The very Essence of Water-Baptism is denyed by some, and questioned by others, whether it be a standing Ordinance in the Church; but that which some question, and others deny, I think need not be questioned, and cannot be denyed; and for their Confutation,

I need say no more, but search the Scriptures; for he that reads the Scripture, and believes what he reads, cannot be Ignorant. Baptism was given in Commission by Christ to his Disciples, *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. and that it was to be done with Water, see it in their Practice; you find *Philip* Baptizing the *Eunuch* with Water, *Acts* 8. 38. And *Peter* Baptized *Cornelius* thus, and his Family; in both places Water is mentioned, and they were both immediately Directed to do it by the Holy Ghost. But the greatest Controversie lies elsewhere, between us and the *Anabaptists*, who it be, that are Subjects capable of this Ordinance, this therefore shall fall next under consideration. I need not step so far out of my way, as to tell you they ought to be rational Creatures, such as are capable of being in Covenant, and to have the Graces and Benefits of the Covenant bestowed upon them, and so stand to reprove the foolish, ridiculous Custom of the *Papists* in Baptizing Bells, *&c.* Neither need I tell you it must be a Living Creature, and not one that is dead; and so reprove the Custom of those, which seemed to be Baptized for the dead, or in their stead, or in their Name; a Custom which seemed to be crept into the Church, in the Apostles days, 1 *Cor.* 15. 29. which Custom *Ambrose* and *Tertullian* speak of. But to come nearer the Question in Controversie; you may assure your selves, that those, and those only that are Members of the visible Church, are to partake

partake of this Ordinance: Those that are in Covenant should partake of the Sign and Seal of the Covenant, *Gen.* 17. 11. *Rom.* 4. 11. Now, these are the Godly, and their Seed, *Acts.* 2. 39. *The Promise is unto you and to your Children.* The seed of Faithful *Abraham* are either those that are of Riper Years, or of Infants: Those that are of Riper Years, are such, as being Converted to the Faith, hold fast the Foundation, and manifest Repentance, for sins past, and profess Obedience for the time to come; and of those, I think, is no scruple made by any that own the Ordinance, if there be, see *Mark* 16. 15, 16. *Acts* 37. 38. Now, Infants that are within the Covenant, are such as have one, or both Believing Parents; that is, such as profess Faith in Christ, and Obedience to him, and Live accordingly, that the Children of those are in the Covenant, and have right to the Seal, by a Birth-priviledge, many able Divines have largely proved, both by Scriptures and Arguments; the Scriptures they make use of, are such as these, *Gen.* 17. 7. 9. 1 *Cor.* 7. 14 *Gal.* 3. 9. 14. *Col.* 2. 11, 12. *Acts* 2. 38, 39. *Rom.* 4. 11, 12. *Mat.* 28. 19. *Mark* 10. 13, &c. *Luke* 18. 15, 16. *Rom.* 11. 16. and many others. Now, you must know, that Godly Parents are under a two-fold Consideration, as they are Men, and the sinful Off-spring of *Adam*; so their Children are the Children of wrath by Nature; but as they are Believers, and the Sons of Faithful *Abraham*, and ingraffed into Christ,

Christ, the second *Adam*; so they, and their Children also are in Covenant: This might be Evidenced by Arguments, but my Discourse being practical, and not polemical, I shall refer you to those that have purposely Treated of it: Yet, lest any should be at a loss, consider Children of Believers in the Time of the Law, were Members of the Visible Church, and in Covenant with their Fathers, and received the Seal and Sign of the Covenant, for such was Circumcision, *Gen.* 17. 11. *Rom.* 4. 11. and that by God's own Command, *Deut.* 29. 10, 11, 12, 13, *&c.* And I conceive it will not be proved, where they were ever taken out of Covenant, or lost this their Birth-priviledge, or what they have in lieu of it, or that our Priviledges are straitned by Christ's coming, and therefore we conceive they are still in Covenant, and therefore being every way as capable of the seal of the Covenant Baptism, as the *Jews* Children were of Circumcision, it ought to be Administred; besides, it was for unbelief the *Jews* were broken off, *Rom.* 11. 20. and that both Root and Branch: How then came the Believing *Jews* to lose this priviledge for their Children? Yea, the Promise is made to them that Believe, and to their seed, *Acts* 2. 39. And Believers Children have been long in Possession, let their Enemies disprove their Right.

2. *Direct.* I'le take it for granted at present, that Infants of one, or both Believing Parents are within the Covenant, and Members of the Visi-

Visible Church upon their Parents Account: It is their Birth-priviledge, and therefore 'tis requisite that they receive the sign, and seal of the Covenant, which is Baptism; that being the initiating sign whereby Members are Orderly entred into the Church, Souldiers are Listed into Christ's Company, and Scholars into his School; and therefore 'tis the Parents Duty to present them, and to Enter them into the Covenant, and bring them timely unto this Ordinance, and Dedicate them unto the Lord, even in their Infancy, as *Hannah* did *Samuel*, even when he was a Child. But because the Child claims this not as he is an Infant, but as he is the Child of such Parents: 'Tis necessary that the Parents, one, or both, be rightly qualified; they should be such as own God in sincerity: For though a serious Profession, not contradicted by a vicious life, may, and must satisfie the Church, who cannot search the Heart, yet it will not satifie God, who tryeth the Reins and the Heart. 'Tis necessary also that they have a competent measure of Knowledge, as well as Faith, and the other Graces of the Spirit, that so they may perform the Duties required. 'Tis requisite they should know in what condition their Children are in by Nature; that they are born the Children of Wrath, as well as others, and derived a poysonful Nature, even from them; for though they themselves may be Gracious, yet they begat not their Children as they were Gracious, but as Men and Women, the sinful

Off-spring of *Adam*; 'tis Nature and Corruption, and not Grace, that is derivative. A Man will never prize a Plaister, that knows of no Wound; nor Physick, that knows not that he is Sick; nor this Remedy, till he know of the Disease. The knowledge of this will make a man admire God's Goodness to himself and Children, and to bewail the inward Distempers of the Soul; and wrastle with God for the Pardon of this Corruption, and for his Sanctifying Grace, and Spirit, when others little regard it; and bless God, that hath provided such a Remedy, sent such a Saviour into the World, and entred into such a Covenant; not only with Believers, but their Seed; and given such a Seal to it, for the confirmation of their Faith: For though it abolish not Sin utterly, as some Teach, yet hath it a tendency to the Mortification, and the weakning of it. They should know also, by what Right their Infants enjoy this Priviledge; this should put them upon it, to clear up their own Interest, and improve it, to renew their Covenant, to Act Faith, and suck sweetness from the Promises, which are made to Believers, and their Children; and upon this Confidence that God is their God, and the God of their Seed; they should Offer up their Children unto God, and Dedicate, and Devote them to his Service, as I said before; List them into his Army, and Enter them into his School, desiring of him not only to allow them the external badge of Church-Members, but also make them

them Members of the Invisible Church; yea, Living Members of Christ's Mystical Body: And be earnest with God to Baptize them, not only with Water, but also with the Holy Ghost; and lay claim to the Ordinances upon this Account, and not only so, but 'tis their Duty to endeavour what in them lyes, to make them his Servants, by Training them up in his Fear, and to Teach them their Duty, both to God and Man. For, as Parents usually Covenant for their Children about the Affairs of the World, and Interest them in Earthly Priviledges; so do they here Enter them into the Covenant, and Interest them thereby into the Blessings of the Covenant, except afterwards they wilfully revoke it. Parents neglect of this was formerly accounted a great Sin; as we see in *Moses*, *Exod.* 4. 24. when God would have killed him for neglecting Circumcision, and threatens such a Soul that is not thus Dedicated, to be cut off from his People, *Gen.* 17. 14. And where God changed his mind, or relaxed this Law, is not easily found. But alas! how careless are most Parents of this Duty? Some Scruple it, and so neglect it; but most bring their Children to the Ordinance, as they themselves come to Church, meerly for Fashion sake; as they beg for nothing, so they expect no benefit by it: 'tis more of Custom, than Conscience; and more of Ceremony, than Service; 'tis blind Obedience they yield, not knowing what God requires at their hands.

3. *Direct.* In this Duty aim at God's Glory, the ſtrengthening of thy Faith, and the good of thy own, and thy Childrens Souls: Many a good Action is ſpoyled for want of a good End, as I told you, the Faſting, Prayers, and Alms of the *Phariſees* were, *Mat.* 6. 1,2, *&c.* In this Ordinance God aims at the foreſaid Ends; his Glory is his ultimate End, and ſhould be ours: He annexes this Seal to his Covenant to ſtrengthen our Faith; uſe it therefore to this End. And by this our Children are Entered into Covenant: As we Live, and Move, and have our Being from him, ſo we ſhould Live, and Move, and Act for him; not only in this, but in all other Duties: This is a Seal of the Covenant of Grace, and in this it excels all the Water in the World: For our Baptiſmal water, though not in regard of it's Eſſence, yet in it's Uſe and Efficacy, paſſeth all other, though never ſo precious: others may Comfort the Heart, but cannot Sanctifie it; *Abana* and *Pharpar*, Rivers of *Damaſcus*, may be more beautiful to the Eye, than the River *Jordan*, yet cannot heal *Naaman*'s Leproſie; it had not that Sanctive virtue put into it by God. So this Baptiſmal water is ſet apart, and Sanctified to an Holy Uſe; even to Seal the Covenant of Grace to Believers, in which Covenant God offers Chriſt, to be our Lord, and Saviour; and promiſes with him to give us pardon of Sin, Regeneration, Adoption, Sanctification, and Redemption; yea, Heaven, and Glory; and thereupon ſets to his Seal

Seal in this Sacrament: And Man, on his part, promiseth to take Christ as he is offered in the Gospel, to be his Lord and Saviour; and promises to believe in him, to be Ruled by him, to forsake all other for him, and to be his Faithful Servant to his Death; and thereupon accepts of the Offered Element, and so puts to his Seal to the Covenant, and by so doing devotes himself to his Service. So that this Sacrament is an engaging Sign, and Seal of the Covenant between God and Man: All the Blessings of the New Covenant are included here; for the Seal is of as large an extent as the Covenant it self, and as a Seal accepted to an Evidence, makes it Authentick; much more God's Seal annexed to his Word, is firm and sure; Heaven and Earth may pass away, but God's Word, thus Ratified, shall never fail. We have God's Promise, under Hand and Seal, and if we perform on our part, doubtless, God will never fail on his; he assures us hereby, that he will be a Reconciled Father to us in Christ; and we shall be his Adopted Sons and Daughters, he will be our God, which is more than can be expressed in words, or conceived in mind. Now, from this Covenant thus ratified, a Believer in the saddest Affliction may fetch Comfort, and refreshing. The Spirit it self being the Keeper of this Seal, produceth it many times to a Christians Comfort; and enables him to read his Name in the Covenant, and shews him the Great Seal for it. Thus *David* could fetch

Comfort from his Circumcision, when he was to Encounterwith *Goliath*; *what is this Uncircumcised Philistine*, &c. And why may not we from our Baptism, in our Conflicts with the *Goliath* of Hell? God is not a Man, that he should lye, nor the Son of Man, that he should Repent. Now, that this is a Seal of the Covenant, see *Rom.* 4. 11. where Circumcision is Called the Seal of the Righteousness of Faith, in which place Baptism succeeds. See also, *Col.* 2. 11, 12. wherein we see, *We are Buried with him in Baptism, and with him also raised again.* And that all the Blessings of the New Covenant are Sealed by this is evident also, *Gal.* 3. 27. *For as many of you as have been Baptized into Christ have put on Christ*, Rom. 6. 4, 5. where the Benefits both of his Death and Resurrection are promised; as also Remission of Sins, *Mark* 1. 4. Yea, Salvation also, *Tit.* 3. 4. By this Ordinance we give up our selves unto Christ, *Rom.* 6. 34. Now, what are the Ends thou aimest at in this Ordinance, when thou presentest thy Child to be Baptized? Is it the Duty, as well as the Priviledge thou regardest? Dost thou Enter him into the Covenant, with an intent to Dedicate him to the Lord, and Train him up in his fear; to bring him into God's Family, and make him a Member of his Mystical Body? 1 *Cor.* 1 13. For by one Spirit we are all Baptized into one Body, to make him a Member of the Church, *Gal.* 3. 27. That he may be Holy, to Marry him unto Christ, *&c.*? 'tis well

well. If only Custom, not Conscience, move thee, thy Ends are bad, and thy Actions Sinful.

4. *Direct.* Rest not in the Common Priviledges of this Sacrament; take not up with Common favours, but lay hold by Faith upon the main Benefit: What priviledge will it be to be Listed into Christ's Army, when we neither fight his Battles, nor receive his Pay? Or to be entred into his School, if we be not Taught, nor Instructed by him; to be of the Number of those that Worship God, when it is not in Truth and Sincerity? To make a visible Profession without the practice, to have a Name to Live, and be dead; or to have a Name to be a Child of God, without the priviledges of Children? To be a Member of the visible Church, and no Member of Christ's Mystical Body? To adhere to the Vine, and not be Planted in it? To be distinguished from those without the pale of the Church, as *Jews* and *Heathens*; and not from rotten Members, as Hypocrites and Dissemblers? To have a form of Godliness, without the power and practice of Holiness? Alas! these things are common to good and bad, as Circumcision did difference the *Jews* from all other People, yet most of them were strangers; yea, Enemies to God; for all are not *Israel*, that are of *Israel*: But 'tis the Circumcision of the Heart that differenceth them from the World. So 'tis here, Baptism differenceth Christians from others; but 'tis the Baptism

of the Spirit that differenceth the good from the bad. Yet these External Priviledges ought not to be sleighted, as the Apostle Argues at large, *Rom.* 3. 1, 2, &c; yet ought they not to be trusted to, or rested in. The main thing intended in this Ordinance, is, that Christ, and all his benefits be Sealed up unto the Soul, therefore lay hold by Faith upon these things, or thy Labour will be lost: This Sacrament is the Seal of the Righteousness of Faith, *Rom.* 4. 11. The sign of the Covenant, *Gen.* 17. 11. Lay hold therefore upon Christ in the Ordinance; yea, upon whole Christ, as he is offered in the Sacrament, for Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption; and with him Grace and Glory is to be had. But if thou take up any thing under Christ, the Ordinance will be of little worth to thee. When thou bringest thy Child therefore to the Ordinance, take not up with Common Benefits; lay out for Christ, and satisfie not thy self without him. The Ordinance of it self is but a dry, and empty Husk, Christ is the Kirnel; 'tis as a Well, Christ is the Water; and what good will a dry Well do thee? 'Tis but a broken Cistern, if trusted to, it can hold no Water: What is a little cold Water applyed to the Body, if the Water of Life be not applyed to the Soul? Be thou Real in thy Dedication of thy Child to God, and really Act Faith upon the Promise, that God may bestow his Son upon him. Thou mayst find in Scripture footing for thy Faith, many Divine and

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precious Promiſes made by God. Conſider ſuch Scriptures as theſe, *Rom.* 6. 38. *As many as were baptized into Chriſt, were baptized into his Death, &c. And if we be dead with Chriſt, we believe we ſhall alſo Live with him,* 1 Pet. 3. 21. *The like Figure whereunto even Baptiſm doth alſo now ſave us,* &c. Mark 3. 11. Heb. 1. 9. John 3. 5. Heb. 10. 22. 24. Gal. 3. 16. Luke 3. 3. Acts 12. 16. & 22. 16. Eph. 5. 26. Titus 3. 5. 1 John 1. 7. *The blood of Chriſt cleanſeth us from all our ſins*; which Blood is here ſignified by this Baptiſmal Water: Here thy Faith may find a Foundation ſure, and ſtedfaſt; take up with nothing ſhort of Chriſt: bring the word of Promiſe along with thee to the Ordinance, preſs God with his Word, he cannot deny it; but without the Promiſe the Ordinance is of little Efficacy: But thus doing, thou wilt find it a refreſhing Ordinance. Chriſt, and all his Benefits may be found in this Baptiſmal Water; yea, whatſoever is neceſſary for the Soul. Perſwade thy ſelf therefore, that ſeeing ſuch Scripture expreſſions hold forth the Sacrament to be the Laver of Regeneration, and the New Birth, to waſh from ſin, and is Inſtrumental to our Salvation, and Sealeth up the Covenant, yea, Chriſt, and all his Benefits to the Soul. No doubt it will be ſo to thee, and to thy Children, if the failing be not on your part. When thou ſeeſt the Miniſter apply the Baptiſmal water to the Body of thy Infant, do thou by Faith behold God the Father applying Chriſt, his Merits, his

his Blood and Benefits to the Soul; and as verily as thou seest the one done Sacramentally, so verily do thou believe the other to be done really, and truly. 'Tis the coming to the Sacrament without Faith, and without the word of Promise, that makes it seem so empty, and vain; but doubtless, there is a rich supply to be had. If we suck, we shall be satisfied: the Well indeed is deep, and Faith is the Bucket: If we have no Bucket, we are like to have no Water.

5. *Direct.* That this Sacrament of Baptism be rightly Administred, it is necessary that it be done agreeably to the mind, and will of God, expressed in his Word; for God will have his own work done in his own way; he hath not left it to Man to use his own will in his Worship: But we must follow the Pattern, and Example he hath left us, and Obey the Precept and Command he hath given us; and be directed by Scripture Light, and perform the Duty in a right manner, and form, as well as to a right End. 'Tis necessary therefore in the first place, that it be Administred by a Lawful Minister; 'tis the work of those that are in Commission, and we find not any Commission Sealed unto any other, than the Apostles, and their Successors, the Ministers of Christ, set apart by God, and the Church for this, and other Holy Duties, for the work of the Ministry; that this is part of their Commission, we may read *Mat.* 28.19, 20. *Go Teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the*

the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I Commanded you; and loe I am with you always, even to the End of the World. Those therefore that run before they are sent, and incroach upon this holy Ordinance, without a Call, let them remember the sin of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, and also their Punishment, for incroaching upon the Priests Office. And as he must be rightly Called, so he should be rightly Qualified for the work; that he may not only know, but also Teach the People the Nature, End, Use, and Benefit of this Sacrament; that he bring not forth a dumb Idol, which neither he, nor the People know, nor Understand. The Subject Recipient ought also to be rightly Qualified, if he be of Years of Discretion, he should know the Principles of Religion; the Nature, End, and Use of the Sacrament: He should profess Faith in, and submission to Christ. And if they are Infants, the Parents should be thus Qualified. The Church they have their Duties too; 'Tis their Duty, not only to be Spectators, but to joyn Hand and Heart in the Work, that they beg of God for the Party Baptized; that not only the Sign, and Seal, but the Grace of the Covenant may be conferred, and that a Seed may be sown in this Ordinance, that in time may spring forth. 'Tis necessary also that a right Element be used, *viz.* water, true, Natural water, without any Sophistication, mixture, or Composition, for this is agreeable to

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the will of Christ; and the *Papists* Addition of Salt, Spittle, and Cream, is a Humane Invention, and no wise pleasing to God. We find Christ was Baptized with water, and the Apostles used no other: The River *Jordan*, *Salem*, and other places were frequented to this End. Thus the *Eunuch*, thus *Cornelius* were Baptized; and this is most suitable to the End for which it was Ordained, and best Answers the Type and Shadow of it, in the time of the Law, and serves best to signifie, and Represent the blood of Christ; for as water is of a mundifying Nature, so is the Blood of Christ unto the Soul; and this also is agreeable unto Antiquity, water being always used in the Primitive Time. *Niciphorus* Reports, when a Minister, for want of Water, used *Sand* in Baptizing a Man; that Baptism was by the Church accounted a Nullity, and the Man was after Baptized with water. And it must also be done in a Lawful, and due manner & Form; the External Form consists in the Ministers words and Actions: For words, 'tis not Lawful for him to use what words he pleaseth, but the words of Institution; he must Baptize in the Name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: And his Actions should be agreeable to his Words, and so he must either dip, or dive, the Baptized Party into the water, or pour, or sprinkle water upon him. 'Tis conceived in the Primitive Time, in those Hot Countreys, dipping in the water was most used, which in some places, especially in

in those cold Countreys, the Church hath altered, for God will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice; and the Scripture seems to hold forth many favourable Instances, for washing or sprinkling, *Heb.* 9. 10. 19. 20, 21. *Acts* 2. 42. & 16. 33. *Mark* 7. 4. It is not like that all these were dipped; the word in the Original signifies washing, whether by Diving into the water, or by pouring water upon, *Eph.* 5. 26. *Titus* 3. 5. For as Circumcision, applyed to one part of the Body, did suffice; so Baptism, though the water be not applyed to the whole, may yet signifie the blood of Christ applyed to the Soul; and the Conscience is said to be sprinkled with this Blood; for as a little Bread, and a little Wine signifies whole Christ; so a little water signifies his Blood, and serve to seal the Covenant as well as more.

6. *Direct.* When thou hast solemnly entered thus into Covenant with the Lord, and his Vows are upon thee, and accepted the Offered Sacrament, and set to thy Seal, and obliged thy self to the performance, know then, 'tis thy Duty to perform thy Vows unto the Almighty; remember with whom thou Covenanteſt: 'Tis with one that cannot be deceived, and that will not be mocked, and one that is well able to avenge the Quarrel of his Covenant, and that will avenge it if thou perform it not. It was wise *Solomon's* Counsel, *Eccl.* 5. 4, 5. *When thou vowest a Vow unto God, defer not to pay it, for he hath no pleasure in Fools;*

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pay that which thou hast vowed: Better it is that thou shouldest not Vow, than to Vow, and not perform. Thou hast in thy Baptism Dedicated thy self up to God, and bound over thy self to his Obedience; thou hast taken Press-mony from him, and engaged thy self to fight his Battles, and to be an Enemy to his Enemies: And canst thou without horrid Treachery fight the Devils Battles against him? Thou hast vowed thy self against Sin, the World, and the Devil; and wilt thou take part with them against God? It is Death for a Souldier to leave his Colours, and side with the Enemy, and is it nothing to leave God, when we have taken Press-money, and Pay from him, and joyn with the Devil against him? What benefit canst thou then expect by thy Baptism, or what good is it like to do thee? *Simon Magus* was Baptized, but had little benefit by his Baptism, he was still in the gaul of Bitterness, and in the bonds of Iniquity, and had no part, or lot, in the benefits of the Covenant. If *Herod* made Conscience of a rash, and unlawful Oath, how much more should Christians of so serious, so solemn, so Beneficial a Covenant? The keeping whereof would make them everlastingly Happy; and the breach thereof will make them eternally Miserable. What horrid Treachery is it for thee to vow Service unto God, and to perform it to the Devil, and the World? To carry God's Mark in thy Fore-head, and the Devils Brand in thy Heart. To call thy self a Christian, and

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Live the Life of an Heathen, or Infidel? What is this, but to put a Sheeps skin upon a Wolves back? Or the Kings ſtamp upon counterfeit Coin? Conſider if thou do thus, Baptiſm will be ſo far from ſaving thee, that it will condemn thee; and the Baptiſmal water that was caſt upon thee will prove, like the *water of Jealouſie*, unto the defiled Woman, *Num.* 5. 27. it will be attended with a viſible judgment, and prove a Curſe, and not a Bleſſing: What benefit doſt thou intend to receive by it? Doſt expect the Benefit of the Covenant? Doſt imagine that God is engaged to thee, and not thee to him? Thou art much deceived, if thou break with him, thou diſ-engageſt him. God indeed Offers Chriſt, if thou wilt receive him; and promiſes upon that Condition to be a reconciled Father to thee, to give thee Remiſſion of ſin, Regeneration, Adoption, and Glory for ever; and hereunto he puts this Seal to the Covenant: And thou promiſeſt upon thy part to accept of Chriſt upon the offered terms, vowedſt Obedience to him, and Dedicateſt thy ſelf to his Service, and thereupon acceptеſt the offered Sacrament, and ſetteſt thy Seal to the Covenant. Now, if thou perform thy part, God will, doubtleſs perform his: Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs away before one tittle of his Word ſhall paſs, eſpecially that given, and ratified under his Hand and Seal; but if thou break with him, and accept not of thoſe Mercies upon the required Conditions, God is not engaged to

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make good what is thus Conditionally promised in the Covenant, unless thou canst prove it to be an absolute grant, that all that are thus Baptized, Live how they list, shall be saved; and then the Ministers, Scriptures; yea, Spirit, and all are of little use. No, no, God will cashire, and disband such Souldiers, and cast out such Non-proficients out of his School, and such unfaithful Servants out of his Family. But alas! how many of these may we find in the World? That Vow Obedience to Christ, and perform Service to the Devil: If he bid them swear, they will swear; if he bid them be drunk, they will Obey: Yea, many, that though they would be loath to break their word with Man, much more their Vow, or their Oath, yet make nothing of these Sacramental Vows: But consider, God will not lose by thee, neither thy sin, or Obedience can hurt, or benefit him, but the benefit, or damage will accrue to thy own Soul.

7. *Direct.* Make a right Use of thy Baptism, and improve it through the whole course of thy Life; for the Efficacy of it is not limitted, or bound up to any moment of Time, but is a Flower that never loseth savour; a Jewel that never loseth it's virtue: 'Tis a Fountain that never is drawn dry. And breasts of Consolation, where thou mayst suck, and be satisfied. Those that use it onely as an Idle Ceremony, that never improve it, or look after it when 'tis once past; and make no Advantage, or Use of it; are more foolish than

than those that take great care to have the Evidences of their Land Sealed, and never make use of the Inheritance, thereby conveyed. Use it therefore for the best Advantage for thy Soul: This is a needful, though much neglected Duty. The serious Consideration of the End and Use of Baptism, and the benefits and priviledges Sealed up by it to us, and ours, and our own ingagements therein to God, may be of great Use to us in the whole course of our Lives, in many cases and conditions. Baptism may be compared to the Marriage knot, by virtue whereof the Wife lays claim, not only to her Husband, but whatsoever is her Husbands; and 'tis as a Seal to an Evidence, which ratifies it, and makes it Authentick, and adds force and Efficacy to it. Baptism, though not to be iterated, or renewed, yet the Covenant thereby once Sealed, remains Authentick for ever, till we pluck off the Seal, or renounce the Covenant. This is a notable means to put us on to mourn for our Sins, and therefore 'tis called the Baptism of Repentance; as it doth oblige us to Repent, for the consideration of our Miscarriages towards God, since we gave up our selves to him, and the falling short of what we have promised, and might have been, and done may well keep us humble, and penitent. When we are tempted to sin, and to break the Commands of God by sin, we may look back to our Covenants to the contrary, and the Vows which we have made; and it may ter-

rrifie us to think that we ſhould break ſuch a Covenant with God, when we make ſome conſcience of Promiſe to Man. Think with thy ſelf, have I dedicated my ſelf to God? What Sacriledge is it? What perfidious Treachery is it now to Serve the Devil, his ſworn Enemy? Haſt thou Vowed Obedience to thy Maker, and promiſed to renounce the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh; how then canſt thou think to look God in the Face at the laſt day, if now thou ſideſt with his greateſt Enemies? Was thy Body waſhed with water, ſignifying the blood of Chriſt, and ſhall thy Soul be ſtill defiled? Wilt thou return, with the Dog, to the Vomit, and the waſhed Sow, to her wallowing in the Mire? How may the conſideration of this fill thee with ſhame and ſorrow? Hence alſo thou mayſt ſet Faith on work to fetch virtue from the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt, to kill ſin in thee, and raiſe thee up to newneſs of Life; for if thou be Buried with him in Baptiſm, 'tis thy Duty thus to do, *Rom.* 6. 3, 4, 5. When Corruption is ſtrong, fetch ſtrength hence to weaken it; when Grace is weak, hence thou mayſt ſtrengthen it. This is an excellent means to aſſure thee of thy Salvation, of the Pardon of thy ſins, and the reſt of the Mercies promiſed in the Covenant; for the Covenant being ratified and Sealed, what ſhould hinder the performance? God, doubtleſs, is real in his Promiſe, and true in his Covenant; he did not intend to deceive thee by an empty Ceremony,

mony, or set his Seal to a blank: No, no; nor if thou revoke not, he will not revoke. Is not this the Sacrament of Regeneration? Is it not called the Laver of Regeneration? Signifying the washing away of sin, *Acts* 22. 16. *Arise, and be Baptized, and wash away thy sins.* Yea, of Salvation, *'tis said to save us,* 1 Pet. 3. 21. Hath not God given thee a pledge in thine Hand of his Gracious meaning towards thee? And what need hath he to dissemble with thee? Doth he gain any thing by thee? Yea, though thou art relapsed, yet look back to thy Covenant, and return. See God's Advice in such a case, *Jer.* 3. 1. *Thou hast played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord.* God will not depart till thou art willing to let him go: And from hence also you may fetch Arguments for Brotherly Love among Saints: we are all Baptized by one Spirit, into one Body, and therefore should sympathize each with other, as the Members do. Those are some of the daily Fruits, you may gather of this Tree, many more grow upon it.

CHAP. X.

Directions in Receiving the Sacrament.

THE next Duty to be ſpoken to, is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which is an Ordinance of God, wherein by the External ſigns of Bread and Wine, ſet apart, and Sanctified to that End and Uſe, and duly Adminiſtred by God's appointment, the Lord ſignifieth, and Sealeth up the Truth of his Covenant to his Elect; and they Seal up their Covenant with him. This Sacrament is a Sign to Repreſent, a Seal to Confirm, and an Inſtrument to convey Chriſt, and all his Benefits to a Believing Soul. The principal Efficient Cauſe, or Author of this Sacrament, is the whole Trinity, but eſpecially Chriſt, who is the Angel of the Covenant; he it is that made the Covenant, and ratified it with his Blood; and therefore it muſt be he that adds the Seals, he makes the Promiſes, and muſt make them good. The Eſſential parts, or Matter of the Sacrament, are either External, or Internal, the one perceived by our Bodily Eyes, the other by the Eye of Faith: The External is the outward Signs, or Symbols, *viz.* Bread and Wine; which, though they are not changed into the Body and Blood of

of Christ, as the Papists Teach; yet are they not naked, bare, or empty things; but such as really exhibit, yea, Seal Christ, and all his Benefits to a Believing Soul: No other Bread nor Wine in the World, though a drop, a bit were worth a Kingdom, are to be compared hereunto. The Internal Matter is Christ, and all his Graces; these are signified, resembled, exhibited, and applyed by the outward Elements. The Form is that which gives a Being, and perfection to the Matter, without the which this Bread and Wine would be but Common Bread and Wine: This also is External or Internal; the External Form consists in the Lawful Administration, and participation of it, according to God's Word; the Internal Form is the Union between the Sign and the thing signified. Now, this Sacramental Union is an Act of God's Spirit, by whose virtue Christ his Merits, and Benefits are not only resembled, and presented to the mind, but are really made one, with the Elements; yet this Union is not Natural, according to place, for there is no mutation of the Sign into the thing signified; neither is the thing signified included, or fastened to the thing signifying, it cannot be a local Union, that Christ's Body should be locally present with the Sign; for Christ's Body, though Glorified, cannot be in all places at once. Neither is it a Physical Union, as if of two United, losing their proper Forms, should by a mixture make a third; but 'tis a Spiritual Union, whereby the Lord

Jesus is really conveyed to the Soul; for besides his Divine presence, and the presence of his Spirit, he is present with his Body and Blood, not locally, but Sacramentally; he is Symbolically present to the mind, he is present Spiritually by the Eye of Faith; Efficaciously present, though absent in Place; yet we find the fruit of his presence in our Spirits, the Ends of the Sacrament are the confirmation of our Faith, the Sealing of the Covenant of Grace, and to be a Badge or Note of our Profession, to be a pledge of our Obedience to, and Communion with Christ, and a Testimony of our Society with the Church; and may seem as a Prospective Glass to view Christ afar off. In the Covenant, God promises to be our God, and the God of our Seed, and sets to his Seal; and we Seal the Counterpane, and ingage that we and ours will Serve the Lord; and by virtue of this Covenant; so mutually entred into, all the Promises and Benefits of the Covenant are ours: so that you see a right receiving of this Sacrament is of very great Concernment, and the unworthy Receiving is very dangerous. Here is *Manna* for a believing Soul, but Poyson to an unworthy Receiver: This nourished *Peter*, but Poysoned *Judas*; it feeds the good, but kills the bad; it makes some better, and some worse; some more Holy, and some more Prophane; it increaseth Grace where Grace is, but increaseth Guilt where Grace is wanting: 'Tis like the Sun when it shines upon a Garden

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of Herbs, it makes them ſmell more odoriferouſly, when upon a Dung-Hill it makes it ſmell more fulſomly: 'Tis like the paſſing through the Red Sea, ſafe to *Iſrael*, dangerous to the *Egyptians*; he that brings ſtrange Fire he ſhall be burnt by it, *Lev.* 10. 3. God will be Honoured by thoſe that draw near to him; he that comes without a Wedding Garment, ſhall go away, not with Grace in his Heart, but with Bolts upon his Heels, *Mat.* 22. 12. According to a mans preparation, ſuch is like to be his Entertainment: He that Sows nothing, ſhall Reap nothing; and he that Soweth Vanity, ſhall Reap Folly; and he that Sows ſparingly, ſhall Reap little, 2 *Cor.* 9. 6. He that taketh moſt care and pains is like to have the beſt Crop. Me-thinks there needs no more Motives to perſwade you, than the benefit of worthy Receiving, and the danger of the contrary; the one hath his Grace increaſed, the other his ſin; the one hath his Salvation Sealed up; the other, without Repentance, his Damnation: He hath God's Curſe under Seal, and they Eat and Drink their own Damnation, and are guilty of Chriſt's Death.

1. *Direct.* If thou wouldſt partake of the Sacrament worthily, thou muſt Examine thy ſelf, whether thou haſt thoſe Habitual Qualifications which are requiſite for ſo Holy a Duty. There are ſeveral Graces that muſt be Exerciſed at this time; but how can a Man Act Grace, that hath t not? He that comes

to the Wedding Feaſt, without a Wedding Garment, is not like to be a welcom Gueſt, *Mat.* 22. 12. Without Grace in Exerciſe this Ordinance will do thee little good: Thou mayſt indeed eat the Bread, and drink the Wine, theſe are bodily Actions, but without Faith thou canſt not feed upon Chriſt in the Ordinance; and what good will a bit of Bread, or a ſup of Wine do thee? Faith is the Hand that receives him, the Mouth that feeds upon him, and the Stomach that digeſts him, and ſucks ſweetneſs from him. Try whether thou haſt Spiritual Life; a Man, by Nature, is dead in ſins and Treſpaſſes, and without Regeneration he remains thus; and what good will a Feaſt do to a Dead Man? If you put Meat into a Dead Man's mouth, what is he benefited by it? Will it nouriſh him? Can he eat it, ſwallow, or Digeſt it, when he cannot Exerciſe any Act of Life, without which, Food will be in vain? No more can this Sacrament nouriſh till a Man be Regenerated, and new born, and have a Principle of Spiritual Life put into him. A wicked Man is a Stranger to the Covenant of Grace; he hath not the required Qualifications, neither doth he intend to keep the Condition; and what then hath he to do with the Seal? Or what hope can he have of the Priviledges? If a Man hath Evidences for Lands mutually Signed and Sealed, if he fail in the Covenants on his part, how can he expect another ſhould make good his? A wicked Man is Uncircumciſed in Heart, and

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thoſe that were not circumciſed, were not permitted to eat the Paſſeover, to which the Lord's Supper Anſwers, *Exod.* 12.43. Now, theſe Habitual Qualifications are ſuch as the Scripture requires, and ſuch as make up the Wedding Garment: And a Man ſhould have Evidences to ſhew, before he lay claim to ſuch an Ordinance; he ſhould be in Covenant, before he receive the Seal of the Covenant. This Ordinance is not for the begetting, but for the ſtrengthening of Grace. The Apoſtle, to this End, bids a Man *Examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup*, 1 Cor. 11.28, 29. *For he that eateth this Bread, and drinketh this Cup of the Lord unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lords Body.* The word Examine ſignifies to take a ſtrict Account of himſelf, and make a diligent ſearch into himſelf; as whether he be Gold, or droſs; whether he be chaff, or Wheat; it may be it is a Metaphor taken from a Goldſmith, that try their Gold, whether it be pure, and the droſs purged out, and conſumed; or from thoſe that try their Coin, not ſuperficially, but by the weight, by the ſight, by the ſound, by the touch ſtone, that ſo they may not be deceived with what is bad, and counterfeit; and ſo muſt we in this caſe: Eſpecially conſidering the Devil hath much counterfeit coin goes abroad for currant, and moſt Men are deceived; and 'tis eaſie to be deceived, eſpecially when our own Hearts are the greateſt Cheats.

Cheats, Try thy Evidences for Heaven, whether thou art Regenerated or not; otherwise thou art not for Heaven, *John* 3. 3. 5. Whether thou art an Adopted Child of God? For none else ought to eat at his Table: Christ will not be Food to nourish any other, he will not have the Devils Brats Dine at his Table; none ought to sit there but those that shall sit with him in the Kingdom of Heaven: Hast thou those Graces that always accompany conversion? For these are necessary in this work, as Sanctified, and Sanctifying knowledge, without which thou canst not discern the Lord's Body, or know God, or thy self, or the Tenure of the Covenant of Grace, the Nature of the Sacrament, or the state of thy own Soul, *&c.* Faith also is necessary to lay hold upon Christ in this Ordinance, and feed upon him, *&c.* Repentance for sin past, and new Obedience for the time to come. Love also to God, to his Word, and to his Children, with a longing desire after Christ in the Ordinance; for what shall we do at a Feast without a stomack: The Trial of these Graces I shall now wave, having in another Treatise partly handled it; 'tis called, *The Souls Looking-Glass, or, a Spiritual Touch-stone*, to which I refer you, because I will not *Actum agere*, do a thing that is done before.

2. *Direct.* Though Habitual preparation, and a gracious disposition, of which we have Treated before, be absolutely necessary, without which a Man cannot be a welcom Guest

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to this Marriage Feaſt, as we ſee in the Fooliſh Virgins, *Mat.* 25. 1,2, *&c.* who, notwithſtanding they had Lamps in their Hands, yet for want of this Oyl of Grace in their Hearts, were not admitted, but the door was ſhut againſt them. I ſay, though this be neceſſary, yet it is not ſufficient; 'tis not enough to have a Marriage Garment, but we muſt have it on, and made clean and handſom, if we would Honour the Wedding. 'Tis not enough to have Faith, and Knowledge, and Love, and Obedience, *&c.* in the Habit; but we muſt have them in the Exerciſe: what good will they do us, if we uſe them not? 'Tis not enough to have Lamps in our Hands, yea, and Oyl in our Veſſels, though moſt go without, but we muſt have our Lamps always burning; we muſt riſe, and trim our Lamps. When we go to meet the Bride-groom Chriſt in ſuch a Duty, we muſt ſnuff our Candles, that they may burn bright: 'Tis not enough for a Muſician to have an Inſtrument, but he muſt have it in Tune, or it will yield bad Muſick; nay, he muſt have skill to uſe it, or it will not do; nay, he muſt be in a capacity to make uſe of his skill, which is not if his hands be cold or numb'd, or otherwiſe out of Order. The Souls Muſick is quickly ſpoyled if it be out of Tune: 'Tis not enough for a Carpenter, or Joyner to have Tools, and Matter to work upon, but he muſt often by grinding, or whetting, put an edge upon them, or they are not fit for his purpoſe. 'Tis not enough

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to have Houſhold ſtuff in abundance, but it muſt be ſet in Order, not on a confuſed heap; yea, and ſcoured, and made bright, if we would uſe them to adorn the Houſe. And in like manner, 'tis not enough for a Chriſtian to have the fore-mentioned Habits, and Qualifications, but he muſt reduce them into Art and Exerciſe; he muſt ſcour them up againſt ſuch a good Time as this, and rub off the ruſt, and make them fit for uſe; yea, make uſe of them, for to this End they were given. And a Chriſtian, notwithſtanding the Habits, may, and will be an unworthy Receiver, if they be not in Exerciſe. 'Tis neceſſary that ſome Vital Operations co-operate to the Receiving, Digeſting, and Concocting our Meat, or it will not nouriſh; and ſo that this Spiritual Food may prove Refreſhing to the Soul: 'Tis neceſſary that there be a principle of Spiritual Life, and the Actings of Grace, concur with the Receiving, and Digeſting of it. A Godly Man may ſometimes be in an Appoplexy, and have a ſtupifyed Soul, and a benumbed Conſcience; he may have his ſwooning Fits, when Life is ſcarce diſcerned to appear: It may ſeem *David* ſometimes was in this Condition, or ſome other great Diſtemper. Now, you know though there be Life, yet in ſuch caſe 'tis not ſafe to give Food; ſtir up therefore thy Graces, and get them in Exerciſe, 'tis the beſt way to procure heat and digeſtion: Conſider ſeriouſly what thou art about, and with whom thou haſt to do, and what is the danger

danger of unworty Receiving, and the benefit of the contrary: Conſider thou haſt a price put into thy Hand, O let not an Heart be wanting to get wiſdom. In this Ordinance all thy wants may be ſupplyed; here thy Graces may be ſtrengthened, and thy Communion with God renewed. Thy Covenant with God is here ratified, and Chriſt, and all his Benefits made over to thy Soul: Here thou mayſt have the pardon of thy ſins, and whatever elſe is requiſite for thy Soul, if thou come preparedly, and Act Faith upon the Promiſe, and improve thy Intereſt in the Covenant; come therefore with a Thirſting deſire of Chriſt in the Ordinances; this is a Qualification required, *Iſa.* 55. 12. *John* 7. 37. *Rev.* 22. 15. Long after this Bread of Life, for this Longing ſhall be ſatisfied. Come with Confidence to have thy needs and wants ſupplyed, and to this End, Exerciſe Faith on the Promiſe, this Grace is all in all in the Duty; 'tis both the Hand and the Mouth: Exerciſe Repentance for ſin paſt, and reſolve to Obey for the time to come. But if thou come unprepared, thou eateſt and drinkeſt thy own Damnation, and becomeſt guilty of the Body, and Blood of Chriſt; let ſuch ſuch Conſiderations as theſe move thee.

3. *Direct.* If thou wouldſt worthily partake of this Sacrament, propound right Ends to thy ſelf in ſo doing; the End, as I have ſaid, as in other Duties, ſo in this, either makes or marrs the Action. Now, the End, though

though last in the Execution, is first in the Intention; 'tis the first mover: What is it that a man will do, but is for some End; this, like the weights on a Clock, or the Spring in a Watch, sets all the Wheels on work, and is the cause of the Entrance, and continuance of the Motion: Who is it that Builds an House, but he propounds some End for so doing, otherwise 'tis an irrational Enterprise? The skilful Archer shoots not at random, but the Mark is in his Eye. The skilful Pilot propounds to himself the wished Haven, as his End, and all his endeavour tends thither. Every one incoming to the Ordinance propounds one End or other, but if thou propound a wrong End, take what pains thou wilt, thou wilt, like the *Pharisees*, *Mat.* 6. 1, 2, *&c.* lose thy Reward, if thou perform, with them, a Commanded Duty, and aim not at God's Glory, but thy own, thou must look a Reward elsewhere, and not from God. The *Papists*, as they Corrupt this Sacrament, in leaving the Institution, and making Additions, and detractions of their own devising, which never came into the mind of God; so they pervert it to wrong Ends to further their own Hellish designs; as to Murder Kings, blow up Parliaments, Massacree Protestants, and conceal their Hellish Plots, *&c.* and many others, I fear, come with base, low, and unworthy Ends to this Sacrament. Custom brings some, shame others, fear of the Law a third sort, *&c.* and coming

coming in their ſin, with unprepared Hearts, and vicious Lives: They make the Table of the Lord the Table of Devils, as the Apoſtle complains; and inſtead of Sealing the Covenant with God, they Seal a Covenant with the Devil, to remain his Slaves, and have the Curſe of God, and their own Damnation under Seal. Now, the Principal End which Chriſtians ſhould aim at, is God's Glory, in the Remembrance of the Death of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 11. 24. 26. *Do this*, ſaith Chriſt, *in Remembrance of me*: By eating this Bread, and drinking this Cup, we ſhew the Lord's Death till he comes. Theſe Elements ſet apart, and Sanctified to this Holy Uſe, being thus taken, we profeſs, and, in a manner, Preach to others the Death of Chriſt, and the Benefits thereby procured, which is the ſum of the Goſpel. This Sacrament is unto Chriſtians as the Pillar of Stone Erected in the midſt of *Jordan*, by *Joſhua*, for a Memorial of the wonderful paſſing of *Iſrael* over *Jordan*; or, as the Pot of *Manna*, commanded to be kept in a Memorial that *Iſrael* was forty Years fed in the Wilderneſs with Bread from Heaven. So is this Sacrament to be Received, even to the End of the World, in a Memorial of Chriſt's Death, and Bloody Paſſion, and the Benefits procured to the Church by it. And if *Iſrael* had ſufficient Cauſe to keep the Paſſeover for a Memorial of their Deliverance from the *Egyptian* Bondage; much more, and greater cauſe have Chriſtians to keep this Feaſt, for a Memo-

Memorial of their Deliverance from this Helliſh *Pharaoh*, the Devil, and his Slavery: This is one End why God left us Sacraments, that whenever we did partake of them, we might Remember this Deliverance, and bleſs God for it; this ſhould put us in mind what Chriſt hath done for us: His Life, his Doctrine, his Miracles, his Death and Paſſion, and the whole work of our Redemption. But alas! many Men, when they have the Sacrament in their Mouths, have the Devil in their Hearts; they ſeldom mention God's Name, except in an Oath, or vain ſpeech: But theſe Mens damnation ſleepeth not. Another End is the Sealing of the Covenant between God and us, as I have often mentioned; God on his part ratifies it, and aſſures us by his Seal, he will make it good. And we on our part Dedicate our ſelves to his Service, and annex our Seal: He promiſes to be our God, and we promiſe to be his People: But many are not in the Covenant, and have nothing to do with the Seal, for this is not a begetting Ordinance but confirming thoſe that are begotten: ſuch as theſe Seal a Covenant with Death, and Hell, *Iſa.* 28. 15. This Sacrament is like the Water of Jealouſie, mentioned in the Law, if a Woman that drinks of it were pure, it would make her fruitful; if defiled, it would make her Thigh to rot, and her Belly to ſwell. Another End is for the increaſing Faith, and other Graces; 'tis not for the begetting, but increaſing Grace, and there-

therefore pre-ſuppoſeth Grace to be there; as alſo for the maintaining Communion with God, and Love one with another, they being Members of the ſame Body, and Heirs together of the ſame Glory.

4. *Direct.* If thou wouldſt receive the Sacrament profitably, examine what it is thou ſtandeſt in need of, and what thou wouldſt have God to give thee, or do for thee; for the Sacrament was Ordained to ſupply our wants, and heal our Diſeaſes. 'Tis the Souls Market day; now, when a Man goes unto the Market, he conſiders what he wants, and what he needs to buy: Now, a Chriſtian's wants, which he here comes to ſupply, are principally in his Graces: 'Tis Spiritual wants, Soul wants, that are here ſupplyed; if Grace be wanting, there is no ſupply promiſed; but if it be weak, there is: Food may nouriſh a weak Man, and make him ſtronger, but it will not give Life to a dead Carkaſs: The Sacrament is not a begetting, but a nouriſhing Ordinance, and God gives none leave to ſit at his Table but ſuch as are his Children; Who will invite a dead Man to a Feaſt? Now, though all God's Children have the Truth of Grace, yet have they many defects in Grace. A Child that hath Life, muſt have Food to maintain Life, and to bring him to his Maturity, and full growth. Now, the wants we ſhould examine before the Sacrament, are either defects in Grace, and decays of Grace, for here is a ſupply to be had for both, if we make a right

improvement of this Ordinance: Defects in Grace are often diſcerned by the prevailing of Corruption, examine thy ſelf well concerning the ſtate of thy Soul, caſt an Eye over the ſeveral paſſages of thy Life, and bring thy Thoughts, and Words, and Actions to the Rule, and compare them with the Word of God; hereby thou maiſt ſee what is ſtrait, what is crooked; look into this Glaſs of the Law, and thou wilt ſee thy own ſpots; when thou compareſt it with the Rule, thou wilt ſee thy Deviations, and wilt find where thou haſt come ſhort, and where thou haſt gone out of the way: Make a Catalogue of thy ſins, eſpecially thoſe ſince thy Converſion, and ſince thy laſt renenewig thy Covenant with God, by this Sacrament; and conſider thy ſins, with their ſeveral aggravations, and when thou ſeeſt what thou ſhouldſt have done, and what thou haſt done, compare the one with the other, and compare the difference, and ſee how ſhort thou comeſt; 'tis the Direction of the Holy Ghoſt, *Jer.*3.40. *Search and try your ways, and turn unto the Lord.* Come then to God with ſhame in thy Face, and ſorrow in thy Heart, and, if poſſible, with Tears in thine Eyes; confeſs theſe thy ſins, with their aggravations: *Aaron* was Commanded to lay his Hands upon the Head of the *Scape-Goat*, and *confeſs over him all the Iniquities of the Children of* Iſrael, *and all their tranſgreſſions and ſins*, Lev. 16. 21. Chriſt is our Scape-Goat, let him bear all our Iniquities. To name thy

ſin,

ſin, without ſorrow, is but an aggravation of it; mourn for it therefore, but let the Love of God, and not the fear of puniſhment, be the ſtrongeſt Motive to Repentance: When thou ſeeſt Chriſt Crucified afreſh before thine Eyes in the Ordinance, conſider, and ſay to thy ſelf, Oh, what a wretch was I, to pluck him out of the Arms of his Father, and cauſe him to ſuffer ſuch Helliſh Torments for my ſake; it was my ſin that were the Nails that pierced his Hands, and his Feet, the Spear that wounded his Side, the Thorns that pricked his Head, the Traytor that betrayed him, the Judge that Condemned him, and the Executioner that put him to Death. It was not the Devil, nor his Inſtruments, the *Jews* nor *Gentiles*, nor all the wicked Men in the World, could have done it, had it not been for the ſins of his Elect: Me-thinks the conſideration of this ſhould work upon an Ingenious Heart; and when thou haſt confeſt thy ſin, reſolve to forſake it; God makes no promiſe of Pardon to any other: And look ſtedfaſtly upon Chriſt offered to thee in the Sacrament, for Pardon of ſin, and power againſt it, he is a propitiation for ſin, *Rom.* 3. 25. *The Lamb of God, that takes away the Sins of the World*, John 1. 29. Having now found out thy defects of Grace, for 'tis weakneſs of Grace that makes us run into ſin: Go to God for a ſupply, Chriſt is ready with ſupplies; if thou be but ſenſible of thy wants, come to the Ordinance in God's way, and where thou art weak Chriſt will

ſtrengthen thee, and where Corruptions are ſtrong, he will weaken them: Be not aſhamed to ſhew to him thy nakedneſs; unlap thy Sores, that thou mayſt have a Plaiſter, and Chriſt will be thy Chyrurgeon, and Phyſitian. In thy decays of Grace, though there be great cauſe of ſhame and ſorrow, yet none of deſpair; there are Recovering Plaiſters, as well as Healing; be but ſenſible of thy want, and go boldly for a ſupply. Come with an empty Soul to Chriſt, and he will fill it; 'tis the full that are ſent empty way.

5. *Direct.* When thou comeſt to this Ordinance be ſure to ſet thy Grace on work, quicken them up unto the Duty, let them not flag, nor faint, for then thy work will be to little purpoſe; what good will Tools do, if not uſed; and how can they be uſed, if not in Order? A Workman that would Live by his Works, ſees that his Tools be ſharp, and fit for the work, without them we can do nothing; nay, if they be dull, or blunt, the work will not go forward; and therefore let us ſtir up our Graces, as *Deborah* did her Soul, when ſhe was to ſing forth the praiſes of the Lord, *Judg.* 5. 12. *Awake, awake,* Deborah; *awake, awake, utter a Song,* &c. Or as *David* did his Soul, *Pſal.* 42. 5. *Why art thou ſo ſad, O my Soul? And why art thou ſo diſquieted within me,* &c. *Pſal.* 103. 12. *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul; and all that is within me praiſe his Holy Name,* &c. *Stir up thy Self, and lay hold upon him,* Iſa. 64. 7. This is the time

time for thee to renew, quicken, and strengthen thy Grace; it was given thee for such a time, and for such a Use as this is; let not this Opportunity be let slip that may be done now, which cannot be done at another time; renew thy Repentance, and quicken it: This may be done by the consideration of the Number, Nature, and Effects of thy sins, and among the rest this is one, it brought the Lord Jesus Christ to this shameful Death: Here thou mayst see him Crucified before thy Face, his Body broken, and his Blood poured out; and mayst *look upon him whom thou hast pierced, and mourn for him as for an only Son*, Zach. 12. 10. Quicken thy Love to God also, and this thou mayst do by the consideration of his Love to thee, and what he hath done for thee, especially in the work of thy Redemption, held out in this Ordinance of the Sacrament: Hadst thou had a Temporal deliverance from *Turkish* Slavery, thou wouldst have been thankful to thy Deliverer, and have Loved him for it; much more then is due to him that Redeemed thee from the guilt of sin, and from the filth of sin, and from the punishment due to sin; from the Curse of the Law, the wrath of God, the Slavery of Satan, and from Everlasting Damnation. Renew thy fear of him also, consider the Fervency of his wrath, against Sin, and Sinners, when thou seest it was so hot against his own Son, when he stood in the room of Sinners; and let this make thee fear to Offend. This

alſo may quicken thy Love to thy Brethren; yea, to thine Enemies, when thou conſidereſt how dearly God Loves thy Brethren in Chriſt, and what he ſuffered for them; and to thine Enemies, when thou conſidereſt the Torments which Chriſt indured for thy ſake, when thou waſt his Enemy, and Commands thee to imitate him in Loving thoſe that hate thee. But eſpecially quicken, and Exerciſe thy Faith, for this is all, and in all, in this Duty, and much conduceth to the well performing of it: 'Tis true, Chriſt hath all fulneſs in himſelf to fill empty Souls: he is the Bread and Water of Life, to feed and Refreſh the Hungry and Thirſty; of his Fulneſs we receive Grace for Grace, *John* 1. 14. 16. In him all Fulneſs dwells, *Col.* 1. 19. There is in him both fulneſs of Merit, and ſulneſs of Spirit; Mortifying, Sanctifying, Quickning Virtue: Here Soul-wants may be ſupplyed. But the way of obtaining this at God's Hands, the way of emptying of Chriſt into the Soul, is by the way of Ordinances; the Word and Sacraments are the Breaſts of Conſolation, from whence we muſt ſuck and be ſatisfied: Theſe are the Pipes through which the Water of Life run, from the Fountain into the Ciſtern; from Chriſt to our Hearts. Chriſt is the Olive, and theſe the Golden Pipes, that convey the Oyl into the Candleſtick, *Zach.* 4. 12. 'Tis true, he could convey it immediately, and empty himſelf into the Soul, without any Inſtrument at all, but this is not uſual, where the

the Word and Ordinances are to be had. But that we may get benefit by the Ordinances: Faith is neceſſary, the Well is deep, aud Faith is the Bucket to draw up this water of Life; and though the Conduit be full of water, and we empty Veſſels, yet if we bring them not thither, they will ſtill remain empty; nay, though we bring them, and place them under the Cock, if we turn not the Cock they are empty ſtill: The Child that plays with the Breaſt, is not ſatisfied till it ſuck: Thou muſt ſuck Honey and Oyl out of this flinty Rock, *Deut.* 32. 13. Faith is the Souls Eye, which muſt be fixed upon Chriſt; the Souls Hand, to lay hold upon Chriſt; the Souls Mouth, to feed upon him: Chriſt, and all his Benefits are offered in the Sacrament, but without Faith they cannot be laid hold upon.

6. *Direct.* Having ſhewed you what Preparation is neceſſary, and alſo what Qualifications, and how thou ſhouldſt ſtand affected when thou comeſt to this Ordinance. I ſhall next ſhew thee how to demean thy ſelf in the very Act of Receiving. For thy External behaviour, or outward demeanour, it ſhould be ſuch as is ſuitable to the Ordinance, and to the preſence of the Great God; Reverent, Grave, Seemly, and ſuch as beſpeaks Humility, and ſelf-abaſing, not Light, and wanton, and gaziſh, but ſuch as becomes a Gueſt at ſuch a Table; yet beware of ſuch Voluntary, or Superſtitious Humility, ſuch as the Papiſts, and ſome others uſe, which hath no

looking in the Word of God; the surest way is to take the Scripture for our Guide. But for thy Inward Carriage, which is most to be regarded, be sure thy Heart be not wanting, for God cannot endure Heartless Service; if this Instrument be not in Tune, the Musitioner is bad; here, if any where, God calls, *Son, give me thy Heart*; and nothing else will serve turn but the Heart, and the Heart broken, and bleeding. Come with the Heart humbled, God cannot endure a proud Person, especially in an Ordinance, that hold forth, that which may humble thee; here is Christ Crucified, and his Blood shed for thy sin; thou wast the Traytor that betrayed him, the Judge that Condemned him, and the Executioner that put him Death; and will not this work upon thee? Is it nothing to have Blood lying upon thee, the Blood of the Innocent, the Blood of a Friend, the Blood of a King; yea, the Blood of the Son of God? What ingenious Spirit but would melt at such a Consideration? Every Sacramental Action of the Minister may further thy Meditation, and help thee up to Heaven in thy Contemplation. When thou beholdest the Minister, who stands in the place of God, setting apart, and Consecrating the Bread and Wine, by the Word and Prayer, will not this bring to thy Mind, the Love of God to thy Soul? Who from Eternity set apart his only Son, *Jesus Christ*, to be thy Mediator, and Advocate; thy Surety, and thy Saviour; well may it be said, *God*

so

so Loved the World, &c. May not the thoughts of this furnish thee with Heart-raising, Heart-warming Meditations. And when thou seest thee Bread broken, and the Wine poured out, doth not this Lively represent the bitter Death, and bloody Passion of the Son of God, *Jesus Christ*, thy sweet Saviour, and Redeemer; his Body was broken, his precious blood was shed for the Remission of thy sins, which otherwise could not have been forgiven. Ah! what a wicked thing then is sin, when nothing would satisfie Divine Justice but the death of the only begotten Son of God? When the Bread and Wine thus separated, thus set apart, from common use, are held forth to thee, apprehend God himself, giving Christ, yea, Christ offering himself with all his Treasures to be thy Husband, thy Surety, thy Mediator, and thy Saviour: Ah! what Soul-refreshing thoughts may this produce? Well mayst thou say, with *David*, *Lord, what is Man, that thou art mindful of him?* Or rather, *Lord, what am I, that thou regardest me, and hast provided such a Feast of Fat things for me, with Wine on the Lees?* When thousands are laid aside as good as I by Nature. And when thou receivest the Elements at the Ministers hand, let thy Faith lay fast hold, and clasp fast about the Lord Jesus Christ, and take him, as given by God, to be thy Husband; and Resolve that the Devil and all his Instruments shall never draw off thy Affections from him; but thou wilt, all others being forsaken,

prove

prove his faithful Spouſe. And when thou Eateſt, and Drinkeſt the Bread and Wine, let thy Faith feed upon thoſe Spiritual dainties, hereby repreſented, upon this *Nectar* and *Ambroſia*; this Bread, and this Water of Life: Receive him, and all the Benefits of the New Covenant by Faith, and in the whole Action let thy Heart Cloſe with God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; and let the whole bent of thy Soul be ſet upon him, and by ſuch Meditations ſtir up thy Heart to bleſs God, and praiſe him for his Mercy, and to Love him above all, and to vow Obedience to him; and as thou lookeſt upon thy ſin with one Eye, to hate and abominate it, ſo look upon Chriſt with the other, to keep thee from deſpair; as he is offered up in the Sacrament, a Sacrifice to ſatisfie Divine Juſtice, and beg of God humbly, yet believingly that he will accept of this Sacrifice as ſatisfactory for thy ſin, and pardon what is paſt, and give thee power againſt Sin for the time to come. Conſider alſo the giving and receiving of this Sacrament, is a further ratification of the Covenant, as I ſaid before, wherein God offers Chriſt and all his Benefits; and promiſes to be thy God, and the God of thy Seed: And thou promiſeſt that thou and thine will Serve the Lord. Let this ſtrengthen thy Faith in his Promiſes, for he will never break his word; and let it ſtrengthen thy Reſolution, that thou wilt never break with him, then this will be to thee an Happy Ordinance.

7. *Direct.*

7. *Direct.* If thou wouldst receive Benefit by the Sacrament, behave thy self well after thou hast received it. All thy work is not done; nay, most is to be done when thou hast turned thy back upon the Congregation; 'tis not the making a Vow, but the making it good, the fulfilling of it, that is the most of the work; 'tis not the preparing for the Duty, or carrying thy self well in the Act of Receiving (though this be necessary) that is sufficient, God expects some after-work: A Servant that is refresht with wholsom meat, and drink, ought not to be Idle, nor to spend his time vainly, there is a greater tye lyes upon him, to diligence and pains taking. So he that comes from such a Feast, and is refreshed with such Dainties, should be more Active, Lively, Quick, and Disposed to Spiritual Exercises; plung not thy self too suddenly into worldly business, distract not thy thoughts about things here below; for, as in sweats, 'tis dangerous to cool over-suddenly: So 'tis here, when the Affections are raised to Heaven, let them not suddenly grovel upon the ground; when they are heated, let not the cold wind of the World suddenly benumb them: And when thou dost set about Worldly busines, remember there is a busines of greater concernment lyes upon thy Hands; and therefore do all in Subordination to God, Redeem some time for Divine Meditation, to consider what thou hast been about, and with whom thou hast had to deal? Thou hast been re-

newing that Covenant between God and thy Soul, which was made in Baptiſm, and therefore look to it that thou make it good. It is better not to Vow, than to Vow and not perform. Conſider whether God makes good his Promiſe Sealed by this Sacrament; if not, doubtleſs, the fault is thine own: God gives thee Chriſt, and thou giveſt him thy ſelf; if thou hold, God will not flinch: He promiſes Heaven, and Happineſs; and thou promiſeſt Love, and Obedience: And thoſe Vows which thou madeſt in Baptiſm, and reneweſt in this Sacrament, muſt be fulfilled; 'tis an horrible thing to prove Treacherous to this God, and to break Covenant with him; God will avenge the Quarrel of his Covenant. 'Tis a dangerous thing to have God for an Enemy, and our Conſciences for our Accuſers; reſolve therefore to make good thy Engagements, and fulfill thy Vows. Conſider in the Sacrament what Entertainment thou haſt met with from God, and what welcome he hath given thee; haſt thou ſped, or no? Did he meet thee in the Ordinance, or haſt thou had an Anſwer of thy Prayers, or haſt been fruſtrated of thy hopes and expectations? If ſo, examine thy Preparations, and demeanour before and after the Duty, haply thou maiſt find ſome miſcarriage; if ſo, humble thy ſelf, and be more careful for the future; take notice of the repulſe, and be humbled, yet deſpair not: Sometimes the Ordinance may be more beneficial after, than at preſent, as the Sacrament of

Baptiſm

Baptiſm uſually is. If thou haſt met with ſome Fruit, but not ſo much as thou expecteſt, or deſireſt, conſider thou art not to be thy own Carver; he deals his Mercies as he ſees beſt, thou muſt wait upon him in a longing Poſture, it will come in the moſt ſuitable Seaſon; if thou haſt found any, 'tis more than thy deſert, bleſs God for it, from whoſe bounty it proceeds: If it be not ſo much as thou expecteſt, 'tis more than thou deſerveſt; 'tis to be owned, he that is not thankful for a little, God will not truſt him with much: Thou giveſt him thanks for Bodily Food, and wilt be thankful for Crumbs, and not for Chriſt? For Temporal Favours, and not for Spiritual Mercies? And this ſhould be expreſſed in deeds, as well as words; thou ſhouldeſt live thanks as well as ſpeak thanks: And as Chriſt gives himſelf to thee, ſo give up, not only thy Name, but thy Heart to him; keep alive in thy Soul the Spiritual Fervor, and maintain thy ground againſt thy Corruptions: See how thy Graces grow, and how thy Corruptions dye; this is the way to grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt: Walk in the ſtrength of one Ordinance to another, and thus doing, thou wilt be a growing Chriſtian, and thou wilt find, through the Bleſſing of God upon thine Endeavours, that the Sacrament, which many get little benefit by, is indeed a Soul-fatting Ordinance.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Directions about Oaths.

THE next part of Divine Worſhip that I ſhall Direct you in, is the right Uſe of an Oath; for though raſh ſwearing be an horrible ſin, as I intend, God willing, elſewhere to demonſtrate. Yet an Oath in it ſelf is Lawful, and neceſſary; yea, a Commanded part of God's Worſhip, *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord, and ſerve him, and ſhalt ſwear by his Name*, Deut. 6. 13. The like we find, *Deut.* 10. 20. My work therefore, in the firſt place, will be to ſhew you what an Oath is, and then to prove it Lawful, and afterwards to give you Directions in this, as I have done in other parts of God's Worſhip. An Oath is a part of that Religious Worſhip which we owe to God, in which, being Lawfully called thereunto, we call God to witneſs the Truth of what we Aſſert, and our real intention to perform what we promiſe, and to reward, or puniſh us according to the Truth, or Falſhood of what we ſay. That it is a part of Religious Worſhip, the Texts before quoted ſerve to prove, 2 *Cor.* 1. 23. *Moreover, I call God for a Record upon my Soul, that to ſpare you I came not as yet unto* Corinth. 2 *Chron.* 6. 22, 23. *If a Man ſin againſt his Neighbour, and an*

Oath

Oath be laid upon him, to make him Swear, and the Oath come before thine Altar, in this House, then hear thou from Heaven, and do, and Judge thy Servants by requiting the Wicked, by Recompencing his way upon his own Head, and by Justifying the Righteous, by giving him according to his Righteousness, Lev. 19. 12. *Ye shall not swear by my Name falsly, neither shalt thou prophane the Name of thy God*, Exod. 2. 7. You see 'tis a part of Religious Worship, for herein God is called to be a Witness to Justifie, or to Condemn; who only knows the Integrity of the Heart, and the sincerity of the Intentions; yea, sometimes 'tis put for the whole Worship of God, *Isa.* 19. 18. Where swearing to the Lord is meant worshipping the Lord: Nay, we have the consent of all Nations, that always have esteemed an Oath Sacred, and Venerable. *Poets*, *Philosophers*, *Heathens*, and *Infidels* make Conscience of this Religious Band, and Reason shews it also; for hereby we acknowledge the Wisdom, Power, and Justice of God: His Wisdom in Searching the Heart, and knowing the hidden thoughts, and intentions of it: His Power, in being able to punish it, and his Justice, in giving every Man according to his desert; and this Worship he will not give to another, *Jer.* 12. 16. *They taught my People to Swear by the Name of* Baal, *Amos* 8. 14. *Zeph.* 1, 5. The Lawfulness of an Oath is confessed by most, and denyed by few, and those Contemptible, we have Scripture warrant for it; yea, the Com-

Command of God, as you have heard, *Exod.* 22. 10. Where an Oath was to be taken in the Case of lost Goods, *Isa.* 45. 63. *Unto me every Tongue shall swear*, Isa. 65. 16. *He that sweareth in the Earth shall swear by the God of Truth.* Now, God would not have Commanded any thing that was sinful in it self, as a part of his Worship. Nay, he doth not only Command it, but lays down the qualifications of an Oath, *Jer.* 4. 2. *Thou shalt swear the Lord Liveth in Truth, in Judgment, and in Righteousness*; and in what Cases it ought to be required, *Exod.* 22. 11. Neither can there any Reason be given, why 'tis not Lawful as well in Gospel times, as under the Law; it was not Ceremonious, nor Typical, neither in the Matter, Form, nor End: Nay, we have Examples of God himself, and therefore 'tis not intrinsecally Evil, *Gen.* 22. 16. *By my self have I sworn, saith the Lord*, Heb. 6. 13. *Because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself*, Jer. 44. 26. *I have sworn by my great Name, saith the Lord*, Amos 4. 2. *The Lord hath sworn by his Holiness.* We have the Example of Christ, *Mat.* 5. 18. *For Verily I say unto you, till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot, or one tittle shall in no wise pass, till all be fulfilled*; compare this with *Heb.* 8 14. *Surely, Blessing, I will Bless thee*, &c. This is called God's Oath, and frequent are the Asservations of Christ: Verily, verily, we have the Example of the Holy Angels also, *Dan.* 12. 7. *The Angel lift up his Hand, and swore by him that Liveth*

Liveth for ever. The like we have, *Rev.* 10. 6. we read of the Saints Swearing. *Gen.*14. 22. & 42. 15. *Josh* 14. 9. 1 *Kings* 20. 3. Yea, in Gospel times, *Paul*, Rom. 1. 9. *God is my Witness, whom I serve in my Spirit, I say the Truth in Christ I lye not, my Conscience also bearing me Witness in the Holy Ghost*, &c. We have the Custom of all Nations, which shews 'tis a Principle in Nature; who, when witness is wanting, take an Oath as a Religious Band; and because they know not the Heart, appeal to God, that doth know it: Neither is there any thing in an Oath that is intrinsecally Evil; neither the Matter, Form, nor End, the calling upon God, the Searcher of the Heart, to bear witness to the Sincerity of our Intentions, for the Satisfaction of others, that cannot otherwise be satisfied; what Evil can there be in that? *Heb.* 6. 16. *An Oath is for Confirmation, the end of all strife*, 2 Cor. 1. 23. Indeed all rash common Swearing is forbidden by Christ, and also by St. *James.*

1. *Direct.* As concerning Oaths, Consideration must be had of the parties themselves concerned; and they are either the Parties requiring an Oath, or the Parties of whom an Oath is required, for both of them require some Satisfaction: He that requires it should do it by Authority, and have a Lawful ground, or otherwise he cannot; he ought not to exact it by force: every Man cannot force another to Swear, and without just Cause no one ought; in such a Case they ought not to be

Obeyed: And for the Person Swearing, which is *Agens Principalis*, the chief Actor in the business; Tis necessary that he have the use of Reason, and that he be *sui Juris*, his own Man; and the things that he swears to give be at his own Dispose; and hence it follows, the Children, before they come to the right use of Reason, ought not to take an Oath, neither indeed should their Oaths be imposed, or regarded; neither doth such an Oath bind the Conscience, being Ignorantly taken; they are Ignorant of the Nature of an Oath, neither can they come with deliberation as they ought, or compare their Action with the Rule, or right Reason; therefore they ought not to be Admitted. But at what Age that is, I think is not easie to determine; for doubtless, some attain it soon, some later; but I think our Laws say Sixteen Years of Age, and before that time their Testimony is not Valid: And an Oath may bind the Conscience of some, if otherwise Lawful, though the Testimony be not Valid by the Law. But alas! how Common, oh, too Common, is that Customary Swearing of Children, even before they can speak plain, as if they suckt it in with their Mothers Milk, and had been taught it with their Mother Tongue, as doubtless, they are, either by Precept, or Example; for how many, before they can speak plain, lisp out Oaths against God himself, whose Name they Profanely abuse, to the dishonour of God, the shame of their Parents, the damage of

the

the Nation where they Live; *for because of Oaths the Land mourns*; and to the apparent hazard of their own Souls; who, without Repentance, will Eternally Curse their Parents in Hell for their sinful Education. Again, Mad and Frantick Men are not fit to take an Oath for the same Reason; for though they once had the use of Reason, yet through their Distemper, 'tis lost. The like we may say of Fools and Idiots, that never had it, and so never knew the use of an Oath; though too many of them, though they cannot speak Reason, can Swear, and Curse, and take the Name of God in vain; and their proneness to this, and other sins, and their backwardness to what is good, discovers them to be of the Sinful Off-spring of lapsed *Adam*, and is a strong Argument for Original Sin; and their want of the use of Reason is some extenuation of their Sin: God requires little where little was given, yet it excuseth not *a toto*, but *a tanto*; it discovers a foul Fountain, that thus bubbles up; their Words, their Actions, their Discourse is not to be heard, why then their Oaths? Again, Men, when far gone in Drink, or Passion, are not fit for this considerate Duty, neither can they do it without Sin, because not with Mature Deliberation; though some Cases their promisory Oaths may bind them, and they ought not to break them, though it be to their own damage, *Psal.* 15. 4. For Drunkenness, or Immoderate Passion is no Excuse of their Sin, but an Aggravation;

for one Sin will not Excuſe another. Again, if a Man be in his right mind, and otherwiſe qualified, yet 'tis neceſſary that he be *ſui juris*, his own Man, at his own diſpoſe, and not anothers, in the thing he ſwears, otherwiſe he cannot avoid ſin, what Courſe ſoever he take: As, ſuppoſe a Son under the Tuition of a Father, or a Servant of a Maſter, ſhould without Parents, or Maſters Conſent, ſwear to go a Journey; as ſuppoſe in Popery, on a Pilgrimage; this is a Sin, becauſe he is not at his own diſpoſe: We read in the time of the Law, if a Woman Vowed a Vow, or a Maid in her Fathers Houſe, if her Husband or Father approved not of it, it was void; conſider then whether Vows of ſingle Life, or Marriage Promiſes without Parents conſent, be valid; I am ſure they are ſinful: Thoſe under Authority ſhould not diſpoſe of themſelves by Oath, without Parents Conſent.

12. *Direct.* Having already ſhewn you who may ſwear, and who ought not to ſwear; I come, in the next place, to tell you by whom you ought to ſwear; and here alſo we ſhall meet with much Corruption in Practice, though an Oath is Lawful, when Lawfully required; as by a Lawful Magiſtrate, in a Lawful Cauſe, from a Perſon rightly qualified, as I have already Diſcourſed, yet 'tis not Lawful to ſwear by whom he pleaſeth; for an Oath, as I told you, is part of Divine Worſhip due to God; and his Glory is Concerned in it, and he will not give it to another, *Gen.* 21. 53.

Jacob

Jacob ſware by the fear of his Father Iſaac; that is, by the God whom his Father feared: That we ought to ſwear by God, I have ſhewed you already, both by Scriptures and Examples, *Deut.* 6.13. & 10.20. and many more: But where we have any Injunction, or Toleration, given to ſwear by any thing that is not God, is not eaſie to find; yea, it is plain Idolatry, to aſcribe unto any Creature Divine Worſhip; 'tis a ſetting of them in the place of God, yea, a diſhonouring of God, and ſetting up ſomething elſe in his ſtead. In a Lawful Oath we do not only aſſert the Truth for that we do, or ought to do without an Oath, but we aſcribe Omniſcience, Omnipotence, Omnipreſence; yea, the Juſtice, wiſdom, and Truth to God: we acknowledge him to be the Searcher of the Heart, and the Tryer of the Reins; and that he is both the witneſs, Judge, and Revenger of Falſhood, and Lying; and furthermore, by Prayer, and Invocation God is called upon to give Teſtimony, with the Conſcience of him that ſweareth, that he ſpeaketh the Truth from his Heart, with an Imprecation in which a Man acknowledgeth that God is a juſt Revenger of a Lye, and binds himſelf to be puniſhed by him if he ſwear falſly, or ſpeaks an untruth wittingly or willingly: & now I appeal to any Man's Conſcience, if theſe things can be Attributed to any Creature, without groſs Idolatry; can we aſcribe to the Creature Omniſcience, Omnipotence, Searching the Heart, and witneſſing with the

Conscience, that we speak the Truth, and an ability to punish, or reward according to the Integrity of the Heart; to protect the Innocent, and detect the Guilty? what is this, but to make them Gods, in giving to them the Incommunicable Attributes of God? Can all this be done without Idolatry? We may find God in Scripture complaining of this Sin, and threatning to punish such Sinners, *Jer.* 5. 7. *They have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no Gods*: See Swearing by the Creatures, is in God's Account, and Scripture Language, a forsaking of God, *Jer.* 12. 16. *They have taught my People to swear by the Name of* Baal. God threatens such as Swear by the Sin of *Samaria*, that they shall fall, and never rise again, *Amos* 4. 8. Now, this was swearing by the Idols of *Samaria*, for *Samaria* was full of Idols: Let those look to it, that swear by the Popish Idol the Mass, or by our Lady, which they make their great Idol, and set her up as high, and in some cases higher than Christ himself. Nay, those that in their Oaths joyn any thing with God, as if he were not of himself sufficient, cannot be Excused, as those, *Zeph.* 1. 4, 5. *That swear by God and* Malchom; and the Excuse which many make, for this horrid Crime, is indeed the aggravation of the Sin; they say, what they swear by are petty trivial things, and therefore no Offence; they take not the Name of God in Vain: But is not the Offence the greater, when we give the Incommunicable Attribute of God to those petty

petty things; if there be no need of an Oath, why doſt thou ſwear? If there be, why doſt not ſwear by God, when thou haſt ſo many direct Commands, and ſo many Examples of God, Angels, and the beſt of Men. Neither is the Practice of ſome of the Holy Fathers, an Excuſe ſufficient; *Joſeph*'s ſwearing by the Life of *Pharaoh*, is by moſt, if not all Learned Expoſitors, judged his failing, learned by Cuſtom in *Pharaohs* Court, and will no more warrant the Practice, than *Noah*'s, *Lot*'s, and *David*'s Example will Drunkenneſs, Inceſt, Murder, or Adultery: And whereas ſome uſe the Expreſſion, *as thy Soul Liveth*, &c. This is not properly an Oath, but an Aſſeveration, wherein God is alſo tacitely invoked to witneſs the Truth; it ſignifies ſuch a thing is as really True, as thou art alive, yet doth invoke his to witneſs this Truth; 'tis hard to ſay which is the greater Sin, to ſwear raſhly by God, which is Blaſphemy, or to Swear by the Creatures, which is Idolatry.

3. *Direct.* Having ſhewed you who may ſwear, and by whom; I ſhall, in the next place, ſpeak of the Matter of an Oath, and here alſo many Offend. An Oath, for the Matter, muſt be about Lawful things, and poſſible, or elſe it cannot be a Lawful Oath: If we ſwear to do an unlawful thing, we muſt not perform it, for 'tis a double Tranſgreſſion; if to do an impoſſible thing, we cannot do it; a raſh Oath is better broken than kept: What a Snare then do Men run into, and

how do they put themſelves upon a Neceſſity of ſinning, that ſwear in their Rage to do what God forbids them to do? Swear to do that which they muſt not perform: See this in *David*, when he had raſhly ſworn the death of *Nabal*, and all his Houſhold, many of them, no doubt, Innocent Perſons, yet after was pacified by wiſe *Abigail*, and bleſſeth God for the preventing the ſhedding of Innocent Blood, 1 *Sam.*25.32,33. The like Oath we read of *Saul*, who ſwore the Death of Innocent *Jonathan*, but was prevented by the People. When *Herod* performed his raſh Oath to *Herodias*'s Daughter, and cut off *John Baptiſts* Head. But a Lawful Oath is agreeable to the mind and will of God, about things Honeſt, Juſt, Good, Poſſible, and Weigty, and in thy Power: If it be impoſſible, then thou canſt not do it, and therefore thou ſhouldeſt make no ſuch promiſory Oath. Now, a thing may be impoſſible ſeveral ways, as in Nature; as for a Man to flye, or a Fiſh to ſpeak: Some things, though poſſible in Nature, yet impoſſible in regard of Time, or other-like Circumſtances; 'tis poſſible to go to *London*, and to *Rome*, but 'tis impoſſible to be at both places the ſame day: And ſome things may be poſſible in Nature, yet impoſſible by Accident; as for a Man to ſwear to come to ſuch a place, by ſuch a time, and he be taken Captive by the Enemy, or fall dangerouſly Sick, *&c.* in ſuch a Caſe 'tis well to put in ſuch a Caution, *If God permit*; the bond of ſuch

ſuch an Oath is looſed, as it was in *Abraham's* Servant, in caſe the Maid would not come with him. Again, we ought not to ſwear to perform unlawful things, any thing which is the breach of God's Law; as to kill a Man, to Steal, or to Commit Adultery, *&c.* Whatſoever is againſt Piety towards God, or Charity towards Man: Whatſoever is againſt the good of the Church, or the Glory of God, and the Common-wealth thou Liveſt in: whatſoever hath any evil in it, ought not to be the Matter of an Oath; for an Oath ought not to be *Vinculun Iniquitatis*, a band of Iniquity. No Man is, or can be tyed to break God's Law; or if ſuch an Oath be taken, it ought not to be kept: Hence *Herod* ſins both in Swearing, and alſo in performing his Oath. But ſome will ſay, if he had not performed it he had been perjured: I Anſwer, when a Man ſwears to break a Command of God, he is perjured as ſoon as he hath ſworn, becauſe he took an unlawful Oath; and if he perform it he adds ſin to ſin, as *Herod* did Murther to Perjury; and ſuch a Man muſt Repent of his raſh Oath, and not add ſin to ſin, in perſiſting in his raſhneſs, to the further breaking of Gods Commands. The Holy Ghoſt gives us a Rule for ſwearing, *Jer.* 4. 2. *Thou ſhalt ſwear the Lord Liveth, in Truth, in Judgment, and in Righteouſneſs.* In Truth, for otherwiſe thou wilt forſwear thy ſelf; for thou muſt not take an Oath againſt thy Conſcience, nor of doubtful things, which thou knoweſt not to be true.

Now,

Now, there is a double Truth, one of the Tongue, and another of the Mind; that of the Tongue is when a thing is really ſo, as 'tis atteſted; that of the Mind, when a Man thinks in his Conſcience he ſpeaks nothing but the Truth; In Judgment not raſh, or ventrouſly, but with due Conſideration of the Nature of the thing, to be worthy the weight of an Oath, the Nature of God, whom we call to witneſs, and under whoſe Divine Judgment we ſet our ſelves, in Caſe we ſpeak falſe; and in Righteouſneſs, that the thing we ſwear be Lawful, and poſſible, and like to bring Glory to God, and good to our ſelves, or others.

4. *Direct.* The next thing to be conſidered, is the form of an Oath, for this alſo is ſtumbled at by ſome, and is to be minded as well as the Matter; this ſhould be agreeable, or at leaſt not contradictory to the word of God. Now, the Form of an Oath is either External, or Internal; the External Form conſiſts in words, or ſigns, or both; the Internal Form conſiſts in the true Senſe and Interpretation of the words of the Oath; a little of theſe in their Order. The External ſometimes conſiſts in words, without ſigns, and thus a Man ſwears, and calls God to witneſs the Truth of his Intentions in plain words; and this Oath is variouſly worded, according to the Uſe, and Cuſtom of the Countrey Men Live in: And thus we may find, as before hath been proved, God, Angels, and Men

Men have thus ſworn. Sometimes alſo Men ſwear, and affirm by ſigns without words, and this is moſt frequent where there are many that enter into an Oath, or Covenant, when the words of the Oath, or Covenant are either read, or ſpoken; and thoſe that are willing to enter into that bond, make it known by ſome External ſign or token, by ſome Action or Geſture, as by a nod with the Head, bowing the Body, ſtanding up, or to a ſide, lifting up the Hand, or otherwiſe, according as they ſhall be required by the Impoſer; or by writing down their Names: By any of thoſe they may teſtifie their conſent, and this is as binding and Obligatory, as if the words were uttered. And ſometimes we may find an Oath taken both by words and ſigns, and this is the moſt Solemn manner of Swearing: Thus God frequently is ſaid to lift up his Hand, when he ſwears to his People; thus the Angel, *Dan.* 12. 7. he held up his Right Hand, and his Left Hand to Heaven, and ſware by him that Liveth for ever; and this hath been the Cuſtom of Heathens, and Infidels, as well as Chriſtians, in making Oaths, and Covenants: Divers are the Rites and Ceremonies which the Heathens have uſed at ſuch times; yea, many and various are the Cuſtomes of the Godly in ſuch Caſes: One was the putting the Hand under the Thigh; thus *Abraham* ſware his Servant, *Gen.* 24. 2. And thus *Joſeph* ſware unto his Father *Jacob*, *Gen.* 47. 29. Another Form much in Uſe, was lifting up the Hand,

Hand, as was even now ſpoken of; this was uſed by God, Angels, and Men; by God, *Deut.* 32. 40. *For I liſt up my Hand, and ſay, I Live for ever.* By *Abraham*, Gen. 19. 22. *I have liſt up my Hand unto the Lord moſt High*; and falſe ſwearers are ſaid to have a Right Hand of Deceit, becauſe they lift it up deceitfully, *Pſal.* 144. 8 11. And various have been the Ceremonies that have been uſed among Chriſtians in the Primitive Times, and in ſucceeding Generations; among us the putting the hand upon the Bible, and kiſſing it is moſt in Uſe, or both; which is but a profeſſing ſign of our conſent, and I know not any cauſe of Scruple in it; thus for the External. The Internal Form of an Oath is the right ſenſe and Interpretation of the words; and therefore an Oath ſhould not conſiſt in æquivalent, or ambiguous words, or phraſes; for then a Man may take them in a different ſenſe from the Impoſers mind, and may require one thing, and another may atteſt another; but the ſenſe ſhould be obvious to both giver and taker, or otherwiſe nothing; or at leaſt we know not what is witneſſed, and the Oath proves vain; nay, the very end of an Oath, which is the Inveſtigation of Truth, is cloſed, *Heb.* 6. 16. *An Oath is the end of ſtrife*; and thus the Name of God is taken in vain, and this part of his Worſhip prophaned, and abuſed; and 'tis no better than a Lye, when we affirm by Oath, what in the Impoſers ſenſe is not true, and ſo it proves Perjury: But the

the words ſhould be taken in the plain Common ſenſe, which is obvious to all. Neither ſhould there be equivocation, or Mental reſervation uſed in an Oath; this is the fallacious dealing of the Papiſts, who by this means think to evade all Oaths, and delude the Impoſer, but they moſt delude themſelves, and wrong their own Souls; for God will not be mocked, whoſe Worſhip is abuſed: They hide part in their Minds, and ſo ſubvert the ſenſe: as thus, they ſwear they were not at *Rome*, and think in their Minds, not an Hundred years agoe; but what is *mentire*, but *contra mentum ire*, though this may ſerve, *in foro humano*, God can eaſily detect ſuch jugling deceits, and will never hold thoſe guiltleſs, that thus take his Name in Vain, and, like *Jezebel*, deceive under pretence of Religion.

5. *Direct.* If thou wouldſt honour God in this part of his Worſhip, ſee then that thou aimeſt at right Ends. In thy Oath, the End muſt be Lawful, and good, or the Duty will prove a Sin, and a Snare. A Man may ſwear that which is Truth, and yet if his End be bad, it will prove his Sin. Now, the End of an Oath, as I ſaid before, ſhould be for the Confirmation of ſome neceſſary Truth in Queſtion, which cannot otherwiſe be proved, *Heb.* 6. 16. *Men ſwear by him that is greater than themſelves, and an Oath for confirmation to them is the End of all ſtrife.* Now, it ſhould be a weighty buſineſs that requires an Oath, and

and a neceſſary Truth that is in Queſtion, ſome doubtful Matter, which cannot otherwiſe be found out, or proved, that cannot be Evidenced, but by an Oath. In this Caſe we find the Apoſtle vindicating himſelf this way, when there was no other way to do it, *Rom.* 1. 9. *God is my Witneſs, whom I ſerve with my Spirit, that without ceaſing, I make mention of you always in my Prayers*, 2 Cor. 1. 23. *I call God to Record, upon my Soul*, &c. We ſee he appeals to God, the Searcher of all Hearts, to witneſs with him, and for him, his Affection to them. 'Tis the Glory of God in the manifeſtation of Truth; and our own, and Neighbours good ſhould be principally minded in this Duty; but too many have by, and baſe, and low Ends in it, and not accordingly. When a thing depends upon the Faith of the Speaker, and cannot otherwiſe be found out, and yet is neceſſary to be known, an Oath of the Lord may be Impoſed, *Exod.* 22. 10, 11. *If a Man deliver unto his Neighbour an Aſs, or an Ox, or a Sheep, or any Beaſt to keep, and it dye, or be hurt, or be driven away, no man ſeeing it, then ſhall an Oath of the Lord be between them both, that he hath not put his Hand to his Neighbours goods, and the Owner of it ſhall accept thereof*, &c. There are ſome things that are not fit for an Oath, as thoſe that have been handed down to us, by Tradition; as whether there were ever any ſuch Cities, as *Troy*, or *Carthage*, and whether they were Sackt, or ſpoyled; though we

we are confidently assured, this is a Truth, we ought not to swear it, because 'tis out of the reach of Personal knowledge: We must swear no more than we Personally know to be true. Some things also are obvious to Common Sense, as that a Quadrangle hath four Angles, a Triangle three, *&c.* these things are not doubtful, and an Oath will not make them more clear; but a thing which cannot otherwise be determined, when we dare not rest upon the Credit of the Revealer, when 'tis doubtful, and cannot be proved but by witness; and this witness is suspected either to want knowledge, or Conscience, every Man being a Lyar, *Rom.* 3. 4. Now, because there is so little Faith and Justice among Men, 'tis necessary to appeal to God himself to witness, which cannot deceive, nor be deceived; and this is done by an Oath, which is the *ne Plus Ultra*, the End of Contention: For he that makes no Conscience of this, is not fit for Humane Society. The very Heathens themselves, when they sware by their Idol-gods, were careful of swearing falsly; yet among Christians in Name, every one hath not this care; nay, 'tis too evidently known that many take little care of their words, or Oath. But this is a strong Bond, and none will break it that fear God, or make Conscience of any thing. But how much do those stray from the very End of an Oath, which is the Investigation of Truth, that affirm by an Oath that which they know to be false, and

call God to witness to a lye; the very Heathens will rise up in Judgment against them, and Condemn them; those that seek thereby to hide the Truth, and not to manifest it, and mind not God's Glory, but their Neighbours Injury by it, as wicked *Doeg* in his Information against *David*; though he speaks the Truth, 'tis to a bad End. Those also are guilty that swear to that they know not, though it prove to be true, yet they are perjured Persons, they swear the knowledge of it which they did not know; those also that swear vainly, idly, and to no purpose; those that swear and never intend to make good their Oaths, or if they did intend it, do not do it. Surely these Men when they call God to witness their Lyes, do not believe there is any God, or that he takes any notice of them, or think they can deceive God, as well as Men, or that he approves of it; but he will call them to an Account, and set their Oaths in Order against them.

6. *Direct.* If thou wilt not Offend by thy Oaths, take heed then of rash, foolish, customary swearing, too much in use in our Times, and for which *the Land mourns*, Jer. 23. 10. It connot but be distastful to God, who will not hold him guiltless, that takes his Name in vain; to have his Name tossed by every Drunken Sot, upon the Ale Bench; and when Men thunder out Oaths and Curses upon Earth, 'tis no wonder if God Thunder out his Judgments from Heaven. When those ill-

ill-boading Fowls feed so near the brink of the bottomless Pit; 'tis a sad Presaging that God's Judgements are near. Customary swearing cannot be without much sin, for the very Nature of an Oath being an Act of Religious Worship to God, shews it should be taken upon mature Deliberation, and serious Meditation; but Common Experience shews in Customary swearing these things are wanting, but the Name of God is irreverently tossed in their filthy Mouths; and thus many Men Curse away their Blessings, for the most of Men are guilty this way; they swear down Vengeance from Heaven upon them, and oft-times upon their Posterity; for the Curse of God haunts the *House of the Swearer*, Zach. 5. 3, 4. And God will be a swift witness against them, *Mal.* 3. 5. The Common swearers cross the very End of an Oath, which is, as I said, the Investigation of Truth, of some necessary weighty Truth, which cannot otherwise be made to appear: But many of their Oaths are spent for the obscuring of Truth, and the Justifying of Lyes; and if Truth be spoken, 'tis either about such trivial matters, unfit to have the Name of God mentioned, or added to them; neither is it any great matter whether they are affirmed or no, and no Body so much as desires any such Confirmation by it, or is little the better Credited to the Oaths of a Customary Swearer, than they do to their words; for Common Swearers are oft-times accounted Common Lyers, and an hundred Oaths will

not Sugar some of their Stories, and make them fit to be swallowed, when they speak, as oft they do, against Reason, and Experience; for many Men use their Oaths to fill up, or, as they think, to adorn their Discourse, instead of other Eloquence; but such Rhetorical Figures may be used in an Oration in Hell. They think themselves the braveſt men, that can swear the biggeſt Oaths, and wish damnation to themselves in the fitteſt Expreſsions, and indeed they are some of the Devils stouteſt Champions: But from such many times an Oath either needs not, or boots not, if they speak Reason they may be believed without, if not, an hundred Oaths will not make it pass for currant. Now, if we search out the Original from whence these Oaths proceed, we may find from a sinful Custom, and a depraved Nature they learnt to swear; but, it was when they learnt to talk; and in some 'tis more Custom than Curstneſs; It befals them, as with men in some Distempers, their Excrements pass from them at unawares, so do their Oaths, they know not when they swear; but 'tis a bad Custom, which makes God our Enemy, and Hell our Portion: were there but a Law made, that for every Oath they sware, they should loſe a Joynt, or forfeit a Pound, and duly Executed, it would make men break off such a Custom: Sometimes those rash Oaths proceed from some perturbation of the mind; as Anger, *&c.* which is a short madneſs, and indeed 'tis a

right

right mad mans part they Act, when another Offends them, and they flye in the Face of God: Sometimes 'tis the Fruit of Gaming, and unlawful Recreation; but sure 'tis a bad Tree that yieldeth such unsavoury Fruit: Take heed therefore of these, and swear not at all, but upon just Occasion; an Oath in it self is not sinful, as is Murder, Adultery, *&c.* no more is it desirable, for it self; as Love, Charity, *&c.* but 'tis to be used as Physick, when other Food will not serve, not for its own sake, but for Healths sake, for Truths sake. 'Tis an Holy thing, and the more Holy a thing is, the more dangerous, if abused; 'tis bad playing with edged Tools, yet many Prophanely call God to Witness at their Cards, Dice, Tables, or invoke him to their Assistance; those make too bold with God, and shall have no thanks for their Labour. In this Sin there is nothing to bait a Temptation; it carries neither Profit nor Pleasure along with it, and the Actors in this sin serve the Devil for nothing, yet they shall not go un-rewarded.

7. *Direct.* If thou wouldst not Offend God by thy Oaths, take heed of false Swearing, for this is the most dangerous of all. If a Man shall Answer for every Idle word, as Christ himself affirms, *Mat.* 12. 36. and for every vain Oath, he be lyable to Damnation, as St. *James* affirms, *James* 5. 12. much more then for false swearing; wherein Men call forth God to witness to their lye, and so in Effect

they deny him to be God; but their Damnation sleepeth not. God tells us, by his Prophet *Zach.* 5. 4. *That his Curse shall enter into the House of him that sweareth falsly, and there remain, and consume both the Timber and the Stones thereof*; and the Prophet *David* makes it a mark of a Citizen of Heaven, that having sworn to his Neighbour, will Faithfully perform, though it prove to his own Injury, and dis-advantage, *Psal.* 15. 4. And indeed he is not fit for Humane Society, that regards not his Oath, for what Bond will then hold him? Now, there are two sorts of Oaths, and in either a man may forswear himself: There are assertatory Oaths, when a man saith such and such a thing was done, or it was not done, or it was done thus or thus, or these and these words were thus spoken, and calls God to witness the same, that he speaks the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth; if now he knows, that what he saith is contrary to the Truth, this is direct Perjury, and a sin, which, without Repentance, will certainly sink him into Hell, and is a shrewd Sign of an Hardened Heart, and a wicked Mind. Nay, if he affirm that to be true upon Oath, which is doubtful to him, and of his own knowledge he knoweth not whether it be true or false, he cannot be Excused: As if he should upon Oath affirm such a man, in *Ireland*, to be dead, and know not whether he be Living or dead, he is guilty of this Sin if it prove true, and the man is dead;

dead; this doth not Excuſe him, for ought he knew he might be Living. A man ſhould certainly know the Truth of that which he poſitively aſſerts by Oath. Again, there are promiſſory Oaths, in which a Man is bound to another, to do ſuch a thing for him, or give ſuch and ſuch a thing to him; and doth not only promiſe, but Swears to fulfill his Promiſe: As when a man ſwears to be a Faithful and Loyal Subject to his Sovereign, or a Faithful Souldier to his Captain, or a Loyal Wife to her Husband; or to give ſuch a thing to his Friend, and calls God to Witneſs the ſincerity of his Heart, and to puniſh him if he prove falſe; and when he takes this Oath intends not to perform the thing Promiſed; this, in God's Account, is Perjury: Though Man cannot perceive it, God doth, who is called to Witneſs the Integrity of his Heart, when there is no ſuch matter. Nay, his Fact is not Excuſed, though the guilt is leſſened, if afterward he perform it; for when he took it, it was with an intent to deceive: Or if he take not his Oath in the known Senſe of him that requires it, this is not Juſtifiable; for an Oath is for the ſecuring, or Satisfaction of the Impoſer, and ought to be without Fraud, or æquivocation, or Mental reſervation in the Senſe of him that Adminiſtreth it. Again, though a man's Intentions be never ſo Sincere when he takes his Oath, if afterward he fail in the performance, if the thing promiſed be Lawful, and poſſible, he cannot clear himſelf

from Perjury. And though every false Oath be dangerous and deadly, yet there are aggravations that make some worse than others: As to take a false Oath before a Magistrate, in a Publick Assembly, in a Court of Judicatory, whereby an unjust Verdict is procured from the Jury, an unjust Sentence from the Judge, whereby the Innocent Person loseth his Life, or Lively-hood; this is worse than in a private Cause, to a private Person, in a business of small Concernment. The Godly, in all Ages, have been very careful to perform their Oaths; as *Joshua* to the *Gibonites*, though gotten by Fraud, and great Cause; God is Offended at the breach of Covenant, as we find many Years after, when *Saul*, in his Zeal, had Slain some of them, God brought a three Years Famine upon the Land, and was never satisfied, till seven of *Saul*'s Sons were Hanged, *Josh.* 9. 19. 2 *Sam.* 21. 1, 2.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Directions about Vows.

THe next part of Divine worſhip, if it may properly be called ſo, is a vow; & this alſo, I ſhall give ſome directions in; as being a buſineſs of great concernment, and that many have, and the Papiſts this day do much erre in. I ſhall firſt ſhew you what a Vow is, and then ſhew you the ſeveral ſorts of Vows; a Religious Vow, is a ſolemn promiſe made to God, by a fit Perſon, in a fit manner, of ſome lawful thing, which is in his own choice, upon ſome ſpecial occaſion, and for ſome Religious end; I ſay 'tis a ſolemn promiſe, to diſtinguiſh it from a purpoſe, and 'tis either expreſſed in words, as the Vow of *Jephthah* was, Judges 11. 30. *And* Jephthah *vowed a Vow unto the Lord, and ſaid, if thou ſhalt without fail deliver the Children of* Ammon *into my hands, what cometh firſt out of the Doors of my Houſe to meet me, ſhall ſurely be the Lords*, &c. or in the heart, as *Hannah* who vowed a Vow, that if God would give her a Man child, that ſhe would dedicate him to the Lord, 1 *Sam.* 11. 13. She ſpake in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; now theſe Religious Vows, are to be made to God alone this we have precepts, and pre-

sidents for; but no precept, or president to make Vows to departed Saints, or Angels; *Psalm.* 76. 11. *Vow and pay it unto the Lord,* Isa. 19. 21. *They shall Vow a Vow to the Lord, and performe it*; *Jacob* vowed a Vow to God, *Gen.* 28. 20. *Israel vowed a Vow*, Numb. 21. 2. but where read we of any Vows to Angels, or departed Saints; It must also be made by a fit Person, one that is *compos mentis*, in his right mind, children, fools, or madmen are not fit to do it; nay, he should be at his own dispose, especially in the matter which he Vows: a Maid in her Fathers house, or a Woman that had a Husband, their Vows were quallified by the Fathers, or Husbands dislike, *Numb.* 30. 34. *&c.* It should also be of things in their own power, otherwise they cannot perform in a fit manner; that is, with Meditation and Consideration: for some lawful thing, for an unlawful thing ought not to be vowed, any more then sworn: hence the Vow of those *forty that bound themselves under a Curse, neither to eat nor drink, till they had killed* Paul, *Act.* 23. 14. was unlawful; it must be upon some special occasion, and the engageing the heart more against sin, and unto duty, and to some spiritual end, as Gods glory, and our own good: now a Vow being of the nature of a promissary Oath, it ought to be performed with like care, & taken with the like deliberation, & fulfilled with the like fidelity, *Eccles.* 54. 56. *When thou vowest a Vow to to God, deferre not to pay it, for he hath*

no

no pleasure in fools, pay that which thou hast vowed, Isa. 19. 21. Psal. 61. 8, & 66. 13. 19. now a Vow is either general, or special; a general Vow I call that which concerns all Believers, at all times, and in all ages, and this is that Covenant wherein God and Man are mutually ingaged, and obliged each to other; wherein God for his part promiseth Christ, and all the blessings of the new Covenant, and Man promises to forsake all other, and keep close to God; God promises to be their God, and they promise to be his people. This Covenant was sealed to the *Jews*, and by the *Jews* in Circumcision, and the Passeover; and to Christians, and by Christians in Baptism and the Lords Supper, as ye have already heard: this is part of Gods worship, and will be to the end of the World; but this is not properly called a Vow, neither comes in the definition; there are some legal Vows, and those are such as of the *Nazarites*, Numb. 16. 2. as also those of vowing Sacrifices, and oblations, these were part of Gods worship in the time of the Law, but are not now; and there are Vows for some bodily exercise, as for Fasting, forbearance of Wine, or strong Drink. &c. these are not part of Gods Worship, but only helps to it: thus the forbearance of the *Rechabites* drinking Wine, *Jer.* 35. 6. Vows of things that are arbitrary, that may, or may not be done, and are left to Mans choice, those are properly Vows, and not such which are commanded,

these

these are Duties before they are vowed, nor of things forbidden, these remain sin after the Vow: now a Vow is either absolute, or conditional, when a mercy is given in, and we Vow some thing by way of thankfulness; conditional, when we promise if God would give us such a blessing, then we will do thus and thus; thus *Jacob* vowed, that if God would prosper his Journey, and give him bread to eat, and raiment to put on, then he should be his God, and that stone should be Gods house *Gen.* 28. 20. the like did *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 11. some also are temporal, binding for a time, and some perpetual binding for ever: now that you may vow and not sin, take these following directions.

1 *Direct.* If thou wilt make a Vow, then thou must make it unto God, and to God alone; for there is no Scripture warrant to make it to any other, thou hast many commands, and many approved examples, of making Vows to God, but none at all to any other Creature, *Psalm* 76. 11. *Vow and pay unto the Lord our God*, but where readest thou, make Vows and fulfil them to this Saint, or that Angel? for Vows are of the Nature of promissory, or the oath, but we may not swear by Creatures, but by God alone, as I have already proved; I know this contradicts the practice of Papists, but why do they contradict the Scripture by their practice? they Vow to this Saint, and that Angel; one Vows so much Oyl, another so many Candles, another this,

this, another that, but who requires these things at their hands? where have they their Warrant? what promise have they to ground their faith upon? when we read of Vows in Scripture, we read they were made to God, *Numb.* 30. 2, 3. *if a man Vow a Vow, a Vow to the Lord*, &c. *if a Woman Vow a Vow to the Lord*, &c. *Deut.* 23. 21, 22, 23. *when thou shalt Vow a Vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it*, Isa. 19. 21. when *Jacob* vowed a Vow, it was neither to Saint or Angel, but to God alone, *Gen.* 28. 20, 21. and why should we not follow such approved examples: but follow the Dictates of our own Brain? some Vows are conditional, if thou wilt give me this and this, then will I do thus and thus, this was *Jacobs* in the place before recited: if thou wilt give me Food and Raiment, thou shalt be my God, and this Stone shall be thy House; thus was *Hannahs*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 11. *if thou wilt give me a Son, then will I give him unto thee*, now this can be directed to none but to God alone, because he alone can performe the condition: O their vows are of thankfulness for mercies received, thus *David* frequently Vows, Praises and Thanks, and to whom should this be made, but unto him *from whom every good and perfect gift comes*, Jam. 1. 17. who deserves the praise, but he that grants the Mercy? we return thanks, for I know the Papists tell us, we may as properly Vow to Saints, as unto God: with this distinction to God, we Vow thankfulness

fulneſs for mercies received, to the Saints as our Mediators, for whoſe ſake we did receive them: but the Scripture acknowledges but one Mediator, between God and Man, even the Man Chriſt Jeſus, and how came they to the knowledge of any other? we know, becauſe God hath told us, that every good and perfect gift comes from him; but we are ignorant, whether we receive any benefit by the interceſſion of Saints or Angels: We have commands to make Vows to God, but not to them, and if there had been ſuch an honor due to Saints departed, the Scriptures doubtleſs would not have been altogether ſilent; nay, we read the heavy judgments the Lord threateneth, *Jer.* 44. 25. 26. to them that made Vows, and would fulfill them unto the *Queen of Heaven*, and let them take heed of ſuch a reward: we deny it, and they muſt prove it by Scripture, where ſuch liberty is granted to pray to them, as if we had, which will never be proved: yet is there a difference between the one and the other, Vows are a more ſtrict and binding act of Religion, than Prayer is, for in a Vow there is prayer and ſomething more, prayer to God for his grace to perform the Vow, and alſo a purpoſe and promiſe of performance; we may put up Petitions to mortal Men, but not make Vows to them; yea, the matter of a Vow is ſometime ſuch, as is due to God alone, as when obedience, or ſuch like are promiſed; 'tis from God alone we may expect the mercy we want, 'tis from him

him alone we receive what we have, 'tis he onely knows the heart, whether we are sincere or no; and he only can bring us to an account, or reward or punish us as we deserve, and therefore unto him alone Vows are to be made and paid.

2. *Direct.* That a vow may be lawful, 'tis necessary that the Subject, the Party vowing be rightly qualified; now that it may be so, three things are requisite they should be endowed with knowledge, faith, and other qualifications of the mind, they should be *sui juris*, at their own dispose, in the thing they vow, and they should be free, and no force put upon them in what they do; but should do it willingly, and spontaniously, for God loves cheerful, not constrained service, a free will offering: that knowledge and understanding is necessary none can doubt: if a Man vow and not know, or not consider the Nature, Use, and end of a vow, this will be but blind Sacrifice, it should be done with great wisdome, care, deliberation, and circumspection, which cannot be without knowledge, *Eccles.* 56. *suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, neither say thou before the Angel it was an error, 'tis a point of folly after the vow to enquire*; those that want the use of reason, whither they are children in their nonage, or Fools or Ideots, such as are not *compos mentis*, in their right mind, but mad or brainsick, these are not fit to make a vow: now 'tis hard to determine the just time, when a childs

vow

vow is obligatory, or becomes obliging; some come to their discretion sooner, and some later, and some as I said not at all: The *Hebrews* held the vow of a man child was not valid till twelve years of age: and the maids at eleven, but this seems young enough; there is many that have lived many more years before they are fit to vow; for till they know the Nature, End, and use of a vow; how should they perform such a duty, faith also is necessary in this case, for, *whatsoever is not of faith is sin*, Rom. 14. 23. *and without faith 'tis impossible to please God*, Heb. 11. 6. other graces of the spirit also are required, yea, a gracious temper and disposition, for those that are in the flesh cannot please God; and they should have grace, not only in the habit, but also in the act, or they will receive little benefit, by this duty: again the Party should be *sui juris*, his own man, and not under anothers command; he must be at his own liberty, as touching the thing he vows, or else his vow is unlawful, we read *Numb.* 30. 4, 5, &c. *that if a woman* in her youth, that is past a child, vows a vow in her Fathers house, if her Father approved of her vow, it was ratified, if not, it was well, the like we read of a married Woman, whose vow was ratified or nullified by her husband; and the like party of reason, shews that a Son, or Servant, or Subject, ought not to vow against the minde of Parents, Master or Prince, concerning things wherein they are subjected to them; can

a Son vow to leave his Parents? or a Servant his Masters service, during his engagements without their leave? to go on Pilgimage, or to live Monastical lives; the Law of Nature and Equity make such vows sinful, when 'tis to the wrong of the Superiours; the inferiour, in this case puts himself upon a necessity of sinning, by such a vow; if he keeps it, he breaks the law of God, which commands obedience to the Superiour, whom they disobey: if they break it, they sin also against God, who tells us 'tis better not to vow, than to vow and not perform: some of the Papists themselves (who give the largest liberty in this case; I conceive more than ever God gives,) acknowledge that a wife without her husbands consent, ought not to enter into a Nunnery, or vow a Monastick life; and the like parity of reason, holds for other inferiours, in the things wherein they are subjected: again, this is a free will offering, and no absolue commands lye upon us, neither do we sin if we vow not, *Deut.* 23. 22. *if thou forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee,* therefore none should be constrained, or compelled to it; it should be voluntary, at every ones own dispose; there is none should be brought to it by force or fraud, by fear or violence, it should be voluntary our of faith, and conscience, in way of thankfulness, for mercies received; and for the obteining those we want, by which we bind our selves to some necessary duty, for good ends, so long as they are con-

ducible

ducible to those ends, *Deut.* 23. 21. *when thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it, for the Lord thy God, will surely require it of thee, and it would be sin in thee. I will pay my vows saith* David, *which my lips have uttered when I was in trouble*, Psalm 66. 13, 14. and 132. 2, 3.

3. *Direct.* If thou wouldest not offend in thy vows, take heed thou vow not any thing that is unlawful, or unnecessary, or unsuitable: if thou vow any thing repugnant to the word, or will of God, it cannot be acceptable to God; nay, whether thou performest or no, thou art a transgressor; there are some vows which bind unto commanded duties, as to dedicate our selves wholly unto God, and to obey him, that our vow in Baptism, which we often iterate in the other Sacraments, these vows are absolute, and without condition; some are conditional, as the vows of *Jacob* and *Hannah* before mentioned: if God give in the mercy, then are we obliged to make good our words, as they did, and also *Jephthah*; but in all, whether absolute or conditional, beware of vowing any unlawful thing: we are commanded to abstain from evil, yea, from the very appearance of it, 1 *Thes.* 5. 22. if in our vows we dedicate any thing to God, let it be such as he approves of: he likes not the hault, the blind, nor the lame in Sacrifice; *Lev.* 22. 23. neither will he be served *with the hire of a whore, nor the price of a dog*, Deut. 23. 18. thou must vow something

thing that is thy own, and lawfully got. Thou must not vow any thing sinful in it self, or sinful by circumstance, or necessary accident: we see the Vows of *Paul*'s Persecutors, that they would neither eat, nor drink till they had killed him, *Acts* 23. 12. was sinful in a double respect: First, as it was a breach of God's Law, *Thou shalt not kill*; and also in that they Vowed a thing not in their own power; so that they were forc'd to break it: Our Vows also should be Considerate, and not rash, nor heady, as was that of *Jephthah*, which put him upon that unpleasing Work, of Sacrificing his Daughter, *Judg.* 11. 30, 34. And that of *Saul*, in binding his People from tasting Food, which had like to have cost *Jonathan* his Life, 1 *Sam.* 14. 25. Neither can those Vows be justified of the *Papists*, wherein they bind themselves, and take the Sacrament upon it, to Murther Heretick Kings, as they call the Protestants, and to Massacree Protestants themselves: But by what warrant is it done, and who gave them this Authority? A Vow should not be *vinculum Iniquitatis*, a bond of Iniquity: These had no better Excuse than *Herod* had for Murdering *John Baptist*; nay, not so good: They Vow it intentionally, he did not; they perform willingly, he with reluctancy. Neither should Vows be to do things Superstitious, as that of the Papists Pilgrimages, to the Lady of *Loretto*, and such like. Nay, 'tis not every Lawful thing that should be the Matter of a Vow, but

ſomething that is weighty and conſiderable, and tends to ſome good End; 'tis Lawful to take up this ſtick, or that ſtraw, to pare the Nails, or clip the Hair; but theſe things are not fit Matter for a vow, 'tis but a taking God's Name in vain, and the abuſing of the Ordinance, to uſe it upon ſuch trivial Accounts. Neither ſhould it be of ſuch things, which muſt be done whether they will or no; as for a Man to vow that he will dye, or come to Judgment; but it ſhould be of ſome neceſſary thing, agreeable to the Scripture, to Dedicate our ſelves to God, to Obey his Commands, as in Baptiſmal vows, 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. Of Thankfulneſs to God for Mercies Received; thus the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 22. 25. *My Praiſe ſhall be of thee in the great Congregation, I will pay my Vows before them that fear him*, Pſal. 66. 13, *&c.* Or for other things, as *David* vowed to give himſelf no reſt, till he had found out a place for God's Houſe, *Pſal.* 132. 2, *&c.* *Numb.* 6. 2. As *Hannah*, for a Son, promiſes to give him to God; for vows either bind us unto ſin, and theſe are unlawful, or unto Moral Obedience, which is Lawful, or unto Ceremonial Obedience, which was Lawful, but now is not, or unto ſomething which is an help to Obedience; as Faſting, which is an help to Prayer; abſtaining from Wine and ſtrong Drink, which is an help to mortifie the Fleſh, to Alms-deeds, *&c.* Or ſome indifferent thing; as *Paul* binds himſelf by a vow not to cheriſh his Hair for a time, and from

from eating of Flesh, in Case of Offence, *Acts* 18. 18. 1 *Cor.* 8. 13. The *Rechabites* abstaining from Wine, and Strong Drink, *Jer.* 35. 6. And so we ought to do, if we find our Nature inclined to Intemperance, in the use of these Creatures. Now, these are most properly Matters for vows, which are not Commanded Duties, nor forbidden Sins, but will be helpful to us in those Duties that are Commanded.

4. *Direct.* As the Matter of a Vow must be Lawful, so also it must be possible, and in a Man's own power to perform; and it should be in a Man's Choice whether he Vow or no, and before the Vow whether he do the thing or no; for if it be a Commanded Duty, he is bound to it whether he Vow or no; but if he Vow he hath a double engagement upon him, and a double sin if he neglect; *for 'tis better not to Vow, than to Vow and not perform*, Eccl. 5. 5. But a Vow properly should be a thing at a Man's own Choice, and also in his own Power; but what a Man is bound to before as his Duty, is not in his Choice; 'tis his Duty though he had not Vowed: As to Obey the Will and Commands of God, *&c.* But yet to quicken and stir up our selves to Obedience, 'tis Lawful, and I conceive many times necessary, and useful, to renew our Covenants, and bind our selves to that which God in his Word hath bound us to, and made our Duty; as the Baptismal Covenant is oft renewed in the other Sacrament: Yet had it been our Duty to have

Devoted our ſelves to God's Service, had we never Covenanted to do it; and ſo in other particular Duties. Now, in ſo doing, we make not our ſelves more Duties than we had before, but ſtir up our ſelves better to perform them; as if we vow a ſtricter watch over our Hearts, a more conſtant courſe of Family Duties, a more conſtant attendance upon the Ordinance, and tye our ſelves to a ſet time for Meditation, ſelf-Examination, and ſuch like Duties; *David* frequenty vows the perfotmance of that, which were his Commanded Duties: As of Sacrifice, Thankſgiving, and the like. Now, concerning things indifferent, which we may either do, or forbear; 'tis good before hand to conſider our Ability to perform them, and not after the vow to enquire; *God hath no pleaſure in the Sacrifice of Fools*, Eccl. 5. 4. As the Matter muſt not be ſinful, ſo neither impoſſible, or out of our Power to perform; as their vow was, both, that vowed never to eat Bread, till they had killed *Paul*: Neither ſhould it intrench upon our Chriſtian Liberty; lay not a ſtumbling-block before thine own Feet: Make not that Sin which God hath not made Sin, except it be for a greater good, and an apparent help in Heavens way; as when a Man vows Chaſtity, that knows not whether he have the Gift of Continency, and ſo lays a ſnare for his own Feet, and, perhaps, brings himſelf into a neceſſity of Sinning: 'Tis a ſad thing, that a Man ſhould renounce Marriage, and vow a Single

Single Life, when he knows not whether he hath Power to contian: To remain Single is no sin; nay in some Cases, a Benefit, where this gift is given: But to vow it, is to vow a thing that is not in their Power; God hath assured no Man that he will give him this gift, and if he do not give it, it is not to be had; he requires no more than he gives; he that will not put New Wine into Old Bottles, nor suffer his Disciples to Fast, till they were able; will not require this at their hands, which he knows they cannot bear. Christ himself tells us, *'Tis a saying, all Men cannot bear*, Mat. 19. 11. And the Apostle tells us, all Men have not this Gift, 1 *Cor.* 7. 7. And this hath proved a Snare to many, who can neither Marry, nor contain; but the Apostle tells us, 'tis better Marry than burn, and God hath provided Marriage for those that cannot contain: And why then should any put a Bolt upon this door against themselves? And for the rest of Monastical vows, as they had their rise either from Infidels, or were grounded in Superstition; so are they besides; yea, contrary to the Law of God: For herein Men Worship God after their own Inventions, and Teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men; and when they look for a Reward, God will ask them, who required these things at their Hands. They vow Poverty, that they may Live at ease; and in plenty, by the Sweat of other Mens brows: This takes Men from a Lawful Calling, which they should follow,

1 *Cor.* 7.20. *Let every Man abide in the Calling wherein he was Called:* And from their Honeſt Labour, which is Commanded, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 10. *If a Man will not Labour, let him not Eat*: It makes them neglect their Duties to their Relations, in providing for their Families, a Commanded Duty, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. *He that provides not for his Family, hath denyed the Faith, and is worſe than an Infidel.* Their Regular Obedience makes them ſlight the Laws of God, to follow the dictates of Man; yea, makes God's Laws of no Effect. *Mark* 7. 8. It makes them do all in way of Merit, which the Scripture denies, *Luke* 17. 10. *When you have done all that is Commanded, ſay ye are unprofitable Servants*, Rom. 6. 23. *The Wages of ſin is Death, but the Gift of God is Eternal Life*, Rom. 4. 6. & 8. 18. & 9. 16. 2 Cor. 4. 17. Where we ſee, all we enjoy is of free Grace, & and no room left for mans Merits: Such vows as theſe therefore have no footing in the Scripture, and therefore are not for our imitation.

5. *Direct.* If thou wouldſt by thy vows Glorifie God, or benefit thine own Soul, thou muſt look at the manner as well as the matter, for this alſo is to be regarded; many a Duty materially good is ſpoyled by the ill performance, as we ſee in Sacrifices and Oblations, and in the Obſervation of the New Moons, and Solemn Aſſemblies, all appointed, and Commanded Duties, ſo ſpoyled in the doing, that God would not own them; yea, his Soul did abominate them, *Iſa.* 1. 10, *&c.* And

66.

66. 3. *He that killeth an Ox, is as if he ſlew a Man; and he that ſacrificeth a Lamb, as if he Cut off a Dogs Neck; he that Offereth an Oblation, as if he Offered Swines Blood; he that burneth Incenſe, as if he Bleſſed and Idol*, &c. We ſee Commanded Duties may be grievous Sins, when ill performed. Now, a vow, as well as an Oath (for a vow is a Promiſſory Oath to God) ſhould be made in Truth, in Judgment, and in Righteouſneſs. In Truth and ſo it ſhould be made with a ſincere Heart, without fraud, deceit, æquivocation, or Hypocriſie: For as God requires the Heart in all Service, ſo likewiſe in this. A Promiſe made to him with Guile, and Hypocriſie, is but a mocking of him, that will not be mocked. 'Tis like *Annanias* and *Sapphira*, their Devoting the price of their Land to God, and afterwards keeping back part of the price to themſelves, and by this loſt themſelves. A notable Example we have of a ſerious vow worthy our Imitation; we may read, 2 *Chron.* 15. 14, 15. where we find *Judahs* entring into Covenant with God, 'tis ſaid, *they ſware unto the Lord with Trumpets, and ſhouting, and with the Cornet, and all* Judah *rejoyced at the Oath, for they had ſworn with all their Hearts, and ſought him with all their deſires*, &c. And how acceptable this was to God, we may find in the following words; *he was found of them, and the Lord gave them reſt round about.* But take heed of being like thoſe, *Jer.* 3. 10. that turned to God, *But it was feignedly, ſaith the*

Lord: But 'tis better not to Vow, than to Vow, and not perform; for God will avenge the Quarrel of his Covenant. And as a Vow ſhould be in Truth, ſo it ſhould be voluntary, not by conſtraint; for it ſhould be with a willing mind, and therefore 'tis called a free-will Offering, and God expects it ſhould chearfully be performed, *Deut.* 23. 23. *That which is gone out of thy Lips, thou ſhalt keep, and perform the Free will Offering, according to what thou haſt Vowed unto the Lord, which thou haſt promiſed with thy Mouth.* Though God do not Command thee to Vow, as in the Verſe before; *If thou ſhalt forbear to Vow it ſhall be no ſin in thee*; yet when thou haſt engaged thy Soul, he expects the performance; for as a Vow is free, ſo ſhould the performance of it alſo. This ſhews, when Young Perſons are put into Monaſteries, Nunneries, or Religious Houſes, as they are called, and forc'd there to take the required Oaths, of Single Life, Regular Obedience, *&c.* and that againſt their wills; 'tis not of Gods Deviſing, but of the Devils Invention: And likewiſe when Children, againſt their Parents wills, are inticed, or allured to take ſuch Oaths, and Vows, and ſo alienate themſelves from their Parents Obedience; this is no pleaſing Service to him: See his mind, *Mat.* 15. 5, 6. Parents muſt not be wronged upon Religious Accounts. And as Vows ſhould be in Truth, ſo likewiſe in Judgment; blind Sacrifices were never acceptable to God: Men ſhould well underſtand

what

what they do, and know the nature of a Vow, and the Lawfulneſs of the thing Vowed, and the profitableneſs thereof, and how it conduceth to their main deſign, before they engage. There are ſome things God will not have devoted to him, as *the price of a Dog, or the Hire of a Whore*, Deut. 23. 18. Thoſe that Vow alſo ſhould know their ability to perform, and not make them, and be forc'd to break them, for, *ultra poſſe non eſt eſſe*, God delights not in the words of ſuch Fools, *Eccl.* 4. 5. A vow ſhould tend alſo for ſome Profit, for Body or Soul, as *Jacob*'s did; but what profit is there in voluntary Poverty, Pilgrimages, in vowing Oyl, Candles, *&c.* to Saints departed, no man was ever yet able to find out. It ſhould be made in Righteouſneſs alſo, and ſhould be at their own diſpoſe, as before was ſaid, to vow that Service to one, which is due to another is a point of injuſtice, and no Law of God requires it: It muſt be of fit things alſo; we muſt not Serve God with what is not our own, it muſt, in a word, be in that which may conduce to God's Glory, and the furtherance of our great deſign; or otherwiſe 'tis either ſinful, or fooliſh.

6. *Direct.* When thou makeſt a Vow, look to it, that thy Ends be right, for that denominates the Action to be good, or bad, though the Duty be never ſo Glorious in the Eyes of Men, they are abominable in the ſight of God, if done for baſe, or by-ends. Now, the end ſhould be in this, as in all other Duties, the

Glory

Glory of God, convinc'd with our own, or others good; this ſhould be our ultimate end, and aim. A Gracious Soul in every Duty ſhould be able to ſay, *propter te, propter te Domine*, this I do for thee, and for thy ſake; and with the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 115. 1. Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name be the Glory. A Chriſtian in all his Duties ſhould follow the Direction of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. Whether ye Eat, or Drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the Praiſe and Glory of God, *Col.* 3. 17. *Whatſoever ye do, do all in the Name of the Lord Jeſus*, &c. Though Vows are not ſtrictly any part of God's Worſhip, yet are they helps and furtherances in it, and therefore ſhould be carefully made, and faithfully performed: We read, I know, of Believers, that have made Vows unto God for the performing of Spiritual Duties, which they muſt not have neglected, though they had not vowed it; but this makes it not Worſhip, but a help to Worſhip; and if they are of things indifferent, yet are they not part of God's Worſhip, but that which conduceth to the better performance of Worſhip. I know the Papiſts they ſay, they are part of his Worſhip, though they are made of things not Commanded; as Meats, Drinks, Apparel, *&c.* and tend to perfection; and by the keeping of them, a man may attain to a higher perfection, than in the Obſervation of Commanded Duties; but what Scripture ſaith thus? Their End, which is to Merit by them

them ſpoyls all their Duties, and makes them abominable in the ſight of God. The Vows we read of in Scriptures, were made to other Ends, and are all conducible to this great end, *viz.* God's Glory. Some have vowed thankfulneſs for Mercies received, ſome Sacrifices, Burnt Offerings, Incenſe, *&c. Pſal.* 66. 13, 14. & 61. 8. & 132. 2, *&c.* Some have made Conditional Vows, if God would give them in ſuch Mercies, they would do thus and thus; thus *Jacob* Dedicated himſelf to God for ever, if he would make Proviſion for him in his Journey, *Gen.* 28. 20, 21. And *Hannah*, that if God would give her a Son, ſhe would Devote him unto God for ever, 1 *Sam.* 1. 11. Read *Lev.* 27. throughout, *Pſal.* 116. 12, 13, 14. *What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his Benefits*, &c. *I will pay my Vows unto the Lord.* And as God's Glory, ſo our own, and others benefit is to be regarded, and may be regarded in a Vow; 'tis ſome ſtay and ground for our Faith, and ſome confirmation for our aſſurance, as we ſee in the fore-cited place, 1 *Sam.* 1. 11, *&c.* when *Hannah* had made her Vow, ſhe looked no more ſad: Sometimes they are made of Thankſgiving for deliverance, as the Mariners in *Jonah*'s Ship, *Jonah* 1. 16. made vows to their gods: Sometimes they are made to prevent Sin for the time to come; as when we vow Sobriety, and Moderation, to prevent the ſin of Drunkenneſs, Gluttony, Pride, or Covetouſneſs: Thus ſome vowed againſt drinking Wine, or ſtrong Drink,

Drink, as the *Rechabites*, *Nazarites*, and others: Some make vows to humble their Souls, *Numb.* 30. 13. *Every Vow, and every binding Oath to afflict the Soul, the Husband may Establish it, or the Husband may make it void.* Sometimes for the mending of our Lives, or the reforming what is amiss; sometimes for the leaving of some Sin, or the performance of some Duty, *&c.* These and the like are the Ends which we should look after, when we enter upon a Religious Vow. So likewise at the good of others; as when we bind our selves to give Alms, to Relieve the Poor, to Redeem Captives, or do works of Charity to our power; these are good Ends, if God's Glory, and not our own Applause, or thoughts of Merit, interpose not; as also to lay out something for Religious and Pious Uses, the maintaining of Faithful able Ministers, *&c. David vows, he will not give Rest, or sleep to his Eyes, or come within his House, till he had found out a place for the House of God,* Psal. 132. 2, *&c.* But where do you read of any that vow, and thought to Merit at God's Hands by so doing.

7. *Direct.* When thou hast made thy vows, thy next Duty is to keep them, to perform the word that is gone out of thy Mouth: 'Tis better not to vow, than to vow and not perform; but it must be supposed then that the vows be Lawful and allowed by God, otherwise the performance is but adding Sin to Sin, and increasing the guilt: He that vows to commit

Sin,

Sin, ought not to do it. If thou Sin in thy Vow, do not ratifie it by performing it, as *Herod*, who made a rash Vow, but did increase his guilt by Cutting off *John Baptist's* Head. But supposing thy vow be Lawful, thou canst not Lawfully break it; nay, though the performance tend to thy damage, for if thou do, thou committest a Sin as bad, if not worse than Perjury; *When thou hast Vowed, therefore defer not to pay, for God takes no pleasure in Fools; pay that therefore which thou hast Vowed,* Eccl. 5. 3, 4, 5, 6. Deut. 23. 23. *When thou hast Vowed a Vow unto the Lord thy God, defer not to pay it, for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee, and it will be sin to thee; but if thou wilt forbear to Vow, it shall not be sin to thee; that which is gone out of thy Mouth thou shalt keep and perform a Free-will Offering according to what thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy Mouth,* Psal. 76. 11. *Vow and pay unto the Lord your God,* &c. More places might be instanced in, if these were not sufficient. If thy vow be rash Repent of the rashness of it, but if it be otherwise Lawful, it must be performed, if it prove to thy damage, it is a reward of thy Folly. But if it be unlawful, repent of thy sin, and Folly in making it, but it must not be performed; for a Vow must not be a bond of Iniquity: Christ himself shews the wickedness of such a vow, *Mat.* 15. 5, 6. where by their vow *Corban*, they made null the Command of God, concerning honouring Father, and Mo-

ther,

ther, and Relieving them. It is not Lawful for us to Dedicate those things to Pious Uses; yea, to God himself, which we owe to another; *David*'s rash vow, 1 *Sam.* 2. 5. 12. 39. was not performed; he vowed the Destruction of *Nabal*, and all his Family, and Blessed God for keeping him from doing evil. The wicked vow of *Paul*'s Persecutors ought not to have been fulfilled, had the power lain in their Hands, *Acts* 23. 21. Nor the rash and unadvised Vow of *Saul*, which tended to hurt and not to good, 1 *Sam.* 14. 39. Nor such Superstitious vows, as we read of, *Jer.* 44. 25. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of* Israel, *saying, ye and your Wives have both spoken with your Mouths, and fulfilled with your Hands, saying, we will surely perform our Vows, that we have Vowed, to burn Incense to the Queen of Heaven, and to powre out Drink-Offerings unto her, ye will surely accomplish your Vows,* &c. God takes it ill in them, and sorely threatneth them for it. But if the Vow be Lawful, he expects the fulfilling of it; as we see in *Jacob*'s Vow, made *Gen.* 28. 20. God minds him of it, *Gen.* 31. 13. I am the God of *Bethel*, where thou anointedst the Pillar, *Numb.* 30. 3, &c. A Young womans vow, if her Father contradict it not, shall surely stand good. See also *Lev.* 7. 16. & 22. 17. & 27. 2, *&c. Psal.* 76. 12. Yea, the Lord threatens those that make not good their vows, that vow a better, and pay a worse, *Mal.* 1. 14. *Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his Flock a Male, and voweth,*

voweth, and Sacrifices unto the Lord a Corrupt thing. Yea, we find he puniſhed this Sin in *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, who Devoted the price of a Poſſeſſion to God, and after kept back part of it, and were both ſtruck dead for it, *Acts* 5. 1, 2, *&c.* A Godly Man, when he promiſeth Reformation of Life, the leaving of any known Sin, the performance of any Religious duty, the doing of any Pious, or Charitable work, *&c.* will make good his Vow. But how uſual is it for wicked Men in their Sickneſs, diſtreſs, or danger, to make vows and Promiſes of Reformation, which they forget as ſoon as the danger is paſt, and return, with the Dog, to the vomit, and the waſhed Sow, to her wallowing in the Mire.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Directions in Fasting.

THE next Duty I shall Direct you in, is that Useful, though much neglected Duty of Fasting, which, though in it self is no part of Divine worship, neither is it Commanded for it self; yet when 'tis performed in a right manner, and to a right End, is a notable help in other Religious Duties, and a good Spur to put us forward to worship God, and fits us for his worship. Now, before I shew you what a Fast is, I shall shew you what Fast I mean, for there are Fasts of several sorts; and 'tis not the bare abstinence from Meat, that is sufficient: There are some necessary Fasts, when men Fast whether they will or no; as when they have nothing to eat, and this is too oft the Poor mans, and the Prisoners Fast; but this is against their wills, and so not thanks-worthy. Again, there is a Natural Fast, when a man abstains from Food for want of a Stomack, as the other did for want of Meat, and this is the Sick mans Fast; and oft-times the Rich man Fasts also, this also is in-voluntary, and deserves no praise. There is also a Physical Fast undertaken for Healths sake, this is not it we Treat of; and there is a daily Fast, when Men use the Creatures very

very temperately, and moderately; not to pleaſe, or ſatisfie their Appetite; but to maintain their Life and ſtrength, to do God ſervice; they eat to live, and not live to eat; and live to ſerve and praiſe God; and this ſhould be every Chriſtians Faſt. There is alſo a Superſtitious Faſt, ſuch as the *Papiſts* uſe; an abſtinence from certain meats, upon Religious Accounts, when in the mean time they fully gorge themſelves with other meats every way as nouriſhing, and provoking to Luſt, and this upon the Account of Merit: And there is alſo a Civil Faſt, when upon Politick Accounts, ſome ſorts of meats are forbidden at ſome times; as with us Fleſh in the Lent, for the encouragement of our Trade of Fiſhing, and for the preſervation of Cattle: There are ſome Miraculous Faſts; as that of *Moſes* and *Elijah*, and of *Chriſt* himſelf, all which Faſted forty days together, and taſted no Food; but theſe are for our Admiration, not for our Imitation. There is alſo a Spiritual Faſt, an abſtinence from Sin, which all ſhould Imitate; and there is a Hypocritical Faſt, ſuch as the *Phariſees* uſed, to be ſeen of Men, *Mat.* 6. 2, *&c. Theſe hang down the Head like a bulruſh*, Iſa. 58. 5. And there is a Diabolical Faſt, wherein the Devils Service is promoted; *A Faſt for ſtrife and debate, and to ſtrike with the Fiſts of Wickedneſs*, Iſa. 58. 4. Such a Faſt *Jezebel* Proclaimed, when under pretence of Religious Worſhip, ſhe took away *Naboth*'s Life for his Vineyard, 1 *Kings* 21. 8,

&c. This is of the Devils Invention: But there is a Religious Fast set apart upon a Religious Account, for a man to Afflict his Soul, and this is that we now speak to, which is the Sanctifying, or setting apart a day, or some portion of time, to the Lord, upon some extraordinary Occasion, by the voluntary abstinence from meat, and drink, and other Comforts of this Life; as also from Labour, and Worldly business, so far as Mercy, Comelinesse, and Necessity will permit, for the more serious humbling of the Soul before God, and pouring out our requests to him for the preventing, or removing of Judgments felt, or feared; or the begging the Mercies we want, or the continuance of those we enjoy. That such a kind of Fast is Lawful, the Scripture is evident; it was Commanded, *Lev.* 23. 27, 28. *Exod.* 33. 5. *Joel* 2. 15. *Mat.* 6. 16, 17. & 9. 15. 1 *Cor.* 7. 5. And such a Fast was Observed, *Esther* 4. 16. *Dan.* 9. 2, 3, 4, &c. 1 *Cor.* 7. 5. *Acts* 13. 23. We have the Examples of the best men; yea, of *Christ* himself in so doing. Nay, *Jews*, *Turks*, *Papists*, *Protestants*, &c. all agree in this; that it is a Duty, though they differ in the manner, and Ends of the Duty: Yet must we not look upon it as any part of Religious worship, or desirable for it's own sake, for 'tis a thing indifferent in it self, and 'tis to be used so far forth as it conduceth to the main design of God's Honour, and the good of the Soul, and serves to the Ends propounded in the

the Scriptures, which is the humbling of the Soul, and making us more ſenſible of our wants, and more fervent in our Prayers. And Experience ſhews when it hath been joyned with fervent Prayer, very great things have been wrought by it, great Deliverances have been got, great Mercies procured, and great Judgments diverted. Now, this Religious Faſt is either Publique, or Private: Publique when Commanded by Publique Authority, and generally Obſerved; as *Joel* 1.19. *Jonah* 2. 7. 2 *Chron.* 30.13. And Private, when 'tis performed by a Perſon, or Family, *Eſther* 4.6. And of this Faſt Chriſt ſpeaks, *Mat.* 6. 17, 18. Now, that you may keep a Faſt as it ought to be kept, take theſe following Directions.

1. *Direct.* If thou wouldeſt prevaile with God in ſuch a duty as this, either to beg the mercy wanting for thy ſelf or others; or to divert the judgment felt or heard, 'tis neceſſary that thou be rightly qualified for the work, for an unqualified Perſon is like to do but little good; a faſt as I told you, was either publick or private, that which is publick is commanded by Authority, and here all men are enjoyned for to come; and indeed 'tis every mans duty; becauſe every man hath offended; for high and low, rich and poor, noble and ignoble, young and old, one with another, none are excepted, no not the Bridegroom or the Bride, nor the child that ſucks upon the Mothers breaſt, *Joel* 2. 16. *Gather the People, ſanctify the Congregation, aſſemble the Elders; gather*

the Children, and those that suck the Breasts: Let the Bridegroom go forth out of his Chamber, and the Bride out of her Closet, &c. nay, the very Beasts of the field are not exempted, *Jonah* 3. 7, 8. *Let neither man or beast, heard or flock, taste any thing, let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sack cloath: and cry mightily unto God, yea, let them turn every one from his evil ways, and from the violence that is in his hands, who can tell if God will turn or repent*, &c. In this fast, the Minister most commonly, is their mouth to God, and Gods mouth to them; yet they have need of qualifications for the duty, for though he perform much of the external part of the duty, yet, the internal rests upon them: thy heart should be qualified to put up an acceptable prayer to God, great ones are not excepted from this duty, for their sins are great, yea, perhaps greater, and admit of greater aggravations than others do, and their examples much followed; Infants you see though uncapable, were not freed, even such as hang upon their Mothers breast, and though they had not actually sinned, yet were a part of that sinful lump of mankind, and deserved judgement as well as others: and therefore should be timely traind up in this Christian duty, and their cries for meat, and the very bellowing of the Beasts might stick something upon the heart of man, and help further to humble and break it; yea, many of those little ones, being Gods Elect, their presence may be an argu-

arguing with God, to ſpare, as the preſence of *Jehoſophat* moved *Elijah* to come to *Ahab*, 2 *Kings* 3. 19. this was one Motive why the Lord would not deſtroy *Niniveh*, becauſe there were ſixſcore thouſand ſouls in it, that knew not the right hand from the left. But though all theſe come, and 'tis their duty to come, yet all come not rightly prepared and qualified for that work; if thou wouldeſt indeed ſtand in the Gap, and turn away the wrath of God from the Land: thou ſhouldeſt be one in Covenant with God, and one that hath the work of grace upon thy Soul; one that hath a friend in Court, an intereſt in Chriſt the Mediator, and canſt through him go boldly to the Throne of grace; one that can without lying, call God Father, and lay claim to the ſhare in his promiſes, one that art reconciled to God, through the blood of his Son; ſuch a one is like to prevail for mercy, 'tis not thoſe that howl for Corne and Wine he regards, 'tis not the crying of the Swine, or the bellowing of Beaſts he matters, if there be a full Congregation of unconverted Sinners, that reſolve to love, and not leave their ſins: I queſtion whether theſe mens cryes, do not prevail more to bring down judgments, than mercies; when men covenant with God, and promiſe obedience and never intend to perform it; this is but a mocking of God, that will not be mocked; and the breaking of the Covenant with him, that can and will avenge the quarrel of his

Covenant; we cannot deceive him, though we come with Tears in our Eyes: If there be not ſorrow in the Heart, our *Crocodile* Tears will not Advantage us: But if there be but weak gifts and parts, if the Heart be right, yet they will be owned; God looks not ſo much at the out-ſide as the inſide of Duty. Though I know thoſe that carry on the work, eſpecially in Publique, ſhould be men of parts and Abilities (and 'tis well if all were thus Qualified) 'tis a ſweet Conjunction, where Grace and parts meet) they ſhould know their own Sins, and the Sins of the Nation to bewail and confeſs them, *Ezra* 9.4.6. *Nehem.* 1.6,7. They ſhould know their own wants, and the wants of the Nation, *Dan.* 9.11.18. In a word, every Novice in Religion is not fit for ſo high a Duty, and therefore Chriſt himſelf Excuſeth his Diſciples for not Faſting, not onely becauſe the Bride-groom was with them, but, as 'tis conceived, becauſe they were not yet fit for ſo high a duty, *Luke* 5.36, 37. *Mat.* 9.15,16.

2. *Direct.* Wouldſt thou Faſt as thou oughteſt to do, and as God requires, 'tis not enough to be rightly Qualified, but come prepared to the duty; there is ſcarce any thing of moment can be well done without preparation, much leſs ſuch a Solemn work, and ſuch an extraordinary duty. Now, the preparation requiſite, is partly External, and partly Internal; the External helps forward the other, and they are ſuch as theſe. On the

Evening

Evening before lay aſide thy Bodily Labour betimes, that thou mayſt trim up thy Lamp to meet the Bride groom the day following; and prepare thy Heart againſt the next days duties, and take that Evening but a moderate Supper, ſuch as will help, and not hinder thee in the enſuing duty; and continue as long as thou canſt, without prejudice to thy Health, or hinderance to thy duties of the day following; for thou ſhouldſt deny thy ſelf in ſleep as well as in other Comforts of this Life; but all this ſhould be but in reference to the main work, and ſo no further to be uſed than it is helpful to it. Now, the main work is to get the Heart into a melting frame, and humble temper; for what good will it do us, to come and go with the Heart unbroken? Now, that it may be ſo, the conſideration of thy ſins, and the ſins of the Nation, with the ſeveral aggravations of them, will be of great uſe, when they are preſt home upon the Spirit by ſerious Meditations: Call to mind therefore thy Original Guilt, and the pollution of thy Nature, and how the whole Man, Soul and Body is defiled by it, and thy beſt Duties ſtained; as alſo thy Actual Sins, many for Number, and hainous for Nature: Call to mind the Sins of thy Youth, and of thy riper Age; the Sins of thy Calling, general and particular; thy Relation Sins, and how thou haſt failed in every Relation thou haſt been in: Thy Sins of Omiſſion, Commiſſion, and Participation; thy Sins of know-

ledge, and Ignorance; of weakneſs, and wilfulneſs; againſt the Law, and againſt the Goſpel; againſt God, and againſt Man, with the ſeveral aggravations of them; as againſt a great deal of Love, and Light; againſt Knowledge, and Conſcience, Promiſes, and Reſolutions, Vows, and Covenants, Means, and helps, *&c.* And not only thy own ſins, but the ſins of thy Family: The ſins of thy Relations ought to be Conſidered; yea, the Sins of the Nation; of Superiours, and Inferiours; of Princes and Governours; for theſe ſhould be Confeſſed, as *Daniel* doth, *Dan.* 9. 2, 3, *&c.* The Sins of Superiours, Inferiours, and Equals; for from the greateſt to the leaſt, all have ſinned, and come ſhort of what they ſhould do: The Abuſe of Mercy which we have had, in general in the Nation, or in particular our ſelves; *David* could mourn in ſecret, when Men kept not God's Law; and we ſhould be mourning in *Sion*: And be ſure come not before the Lord to confeſs, or bewail any one Sin, that thou doſt not repent of, and reſolve to leave: Nor to bewail the Omiſſion of any one Duty, which thou art not reſolved for the time to come to practice. Nor to beg for one Mercy, that thou art not reſolved to Labour for, as well as to Pray for; *For if thou regardeſt Iniquity in thy Heart, God will not hear thy Prayer*, Pſal. 66. 18. Shouldeſt thou come with a reſolution to Live in ſin, and pray for the Pardon of it, thou doſt but mock God, that will not be mocked, and takeſt his Name

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in vain; when thou ſayeſt, Lord, when wilt thou give me this Mercy? God may ſay, Man, when wilt thou leave thy Sin? When wilt thou give me thy Heart? If thou ſay never, God will return thee the like Anſwer. Never think by thy Prayers to benefit thy ſelf, or the Church, if thou wilt not reform thine own Heart. And as thou muſt conſider thy ſins, ſo alſo thy wants; what Mercies thou wouldeſt beg for thy ſelf, or others; ſhould a King promiſe at ſuch a day to meet his Subjects, and ſupply their wants, how careful would they be, not only to come, but alſo to conſider what Petitions to put up, and what Favours to beg; 'tis no doubt but while we are in theſe Houſes of Clay, we have a *back bias* of Corruption, drawing us out of the way, and ſo many are our wants. Some Souls are made up all of wants, they have no Grace, let them beg, and pray, and endeavour that ſome may be beſtowed, and to have their Hearts Sanctified, and their Natures changed. The beſt of God's People have defects in Grace, and theſe they ſhould Labour to have removed, and their wants ſupplyed. Some have decays in Grace, and this is the time for their recovery; in a word, many things we have to beg for our ſelves, many for our Friends; many for the Nation, and many for the Church in general; many Judgments are threatned, which we would have diverted, and many felt, we would have removed; know then before hand, what Errant thou art come about.

3. *Direct.*

3. *Direct.* Concerning our External Carriage in the days of Humiliation, I ſhall ſpeak ſomething, for having made the preparation before mentioned, and the day being come, there are ſome External Duties required, *viz.* That we riſe betimes that morning, and deny our ſelves that reſt and ſleep, which our ſluggiſh Nature requires, ſo far forth as we do not thereby diſ-able our ſelves for the duty, and that we ſpend the whole day in the work, and let us not think a whole day too much, for if we prevail not for the diverting thoſe Judgments which our ſins deſerve; perhaps, we may ſpend many Years in greater Sufferings: And 'tis thy duty alſo to bring as many of thy Family as conveniently may be along with thee, eſpecially thoſe that have Underſtanding, that the Congregation may be full, that we may joyn together as one man, in the work; that may be done by many, that a few cannot do, I have obſerved upon ſuch occaſions; men think one in a Family ſufficient to come to the Congregation, while the other mind their worldly Occaſions; but as theſe Sow ſparingly, ſo they are like to reap little. The King of *Nineveh* will riſe up in Judgment againſt thoſe, who Commanded all men and Beaſts to reſt and Faſt, and what lies in thee, come with an humble Heart, and a ſelf-denying Spirit to the work; and to this End Faſting is enjoyned, which of it ſelf is a thing indifferent, but of excellent uſe to bring the Body into Subjection. Now, this ſhould be

be a total abstinence from all meat and drink, except unfeigned necessity forbid; the very Name and Nature of a Fast implies this much, and if this abstinence be not observed, 'tis no Fast. *Esther* we find, Commands the *Jews* neither to eat nor drink for three days, and promises that she and her Maids would do the like, *Est.* 4. 16. Yet if this total abstinence be really prejudicial to the Health, and prove a hinderance, and not a furtherance to the duty, 'tis Lawful to take some little refreshing, for though Scripture Examples afford us not so much; yet rectified reason, yea, and Scripture grounds warrant it, *Hos.* 6. 6. *I have desired Mercy and not Sacrifice*; a place urged by Christ himself upon such an Occasion, *Mat.* 12. 7. And Fasting being Ordained as an help, is no duty when it becomes an hinderance, but then it should be but a small reflection, so much, and no more, as will revive decayed Nature, prevent the danger, and fit a man for the duty. The *Papists* in their Fasts, or rather mock-fasts, observe not this rule; their Fast consists not in the abstinence from, but in the choice of meats and drinks, for which we have no Scripture Evidence, nor indeed any shew of reason; they forbear flesh, when they gorge themselves with Wine, and strong Drink, and Fish, and other Dainties, which no less pamper the Body, and provoke Lust; but at this rate a Man may Fast, not only forty days, but forty Years, with little Trouble: But a Scripture Fast consists not in the

the choice of Meat, but in the abstinence from Meat, and Drink, not in the choice of Meat, for all is alike Lawful, 1 *Cor.* 10. 25. 27. & 8. 8. *Heb.* 13. 8, 9. And as Meat and Drink, so also Bodily Labour is forbidden; this must be laid aside, as upon a Sabbath; for Worldly business divert the mind, and unfit it for Duty. We find upon those days of Atonement, as they were called under the Law, work was forbidden upon pain of death, *Lev.* 23, 27, &c. *Whatsoever Soul it be, that doth any work upon that same day, the same Soul will I destroy from among his People.* Also *Num.* 29. 7. *Lev.* 16. 29. Now, though the Ceremonious part of this be taken away, yet so far as it conduceth to the main End, *viz.* to Afflict the Soul, it remains in Force: How can there be a Solemn Congregating together, or the work of the day be carried on, if there be not a cessation from Bodily Labour? Again, Costly and Gorgeous Apparel must be that day laid aside, as unfit for such a Duty; we find Kings themselves upon such days, Girded themselves with Sack-cloath, and put Ashes upon their Heads, and did not, as in our times, mourn in Scarlet, Silks, and Sattins, *Exod.* 33. 4, 5, 6. *Jonah* 3. 6. Musick also, and other Sports and Recreations must be abstained, as very unsuitable for Mourning times. God complains of the *Jews*, that they in their Fasts did find pleasure; and may he not Complain of many of us, that as soon as the Ordinance is over, fall to our Recreations, as

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at other times, *Iſa.* 58. 3. Yea, from Marriage Duties, at other times Lawful, and Sanctified by the word of God, 1 *Cor.* 7. 5. *Defraud not one another, except it be with conſent for a time, that you may give your ſelves to Faſting and Prayer.* Alſo *Joel* 2. 16. Nay, all Delights and Recreations, whereby the Nature of Man is refreſhed, ſhould be forborn: See an Example of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 16. 20. And in *Daniel*, Chap. 10. 3. Theſe things ſerve partly to humble us, partly to take revenge upon our ſelves, for our former Miſcarriages.

4. *Direct.* Having Directed you in the External part of the Duty, it remains that I ſpeak ſomething of the Internal, which is the very Life and Soul of the Duty, without which all the reſt is but a dead Carkaſs, a bare Name of a Faſt. When thou comeſt therefore before God in this Duty, ſet thy ſelf before him with all reverence, as before an Angry Judge, juſtly provoked by thy Faults. Come with ſhame in thy Face, and ſorrow in thy Heart, and, if poſſible, with Tears in thy Eyes, and make a full and free Confeſſion of thy Faults, with all the aggravating Circumſtances thereof; and reſt not till thy Heart bleed for thy Sins: Shouldeſt thou rip, and confeſs all the ſins that ever thou hadſt Committed, with all the aggravations, with which they are cloathed, if thy Heart were not touch'd with ſorrow for them, it would be but a further aggravation of them, and provoke

provoke the Lord to Anger, and not to Compaſſion. If thy Faſt be private, confeſs all the evil thou knoweſt by thy ſelf, till thou canſt ſay with a good Conſcience, I have kept nothing back. Now, this preſſing Sin upon thy Soul is called a renting of the Heart, *Joel* 2. 13. *Rent your Hearts, and not your Garments*: An Afflicting of the Soul, *Lev.* 16.29. *In it you ſhall Afflict your ſouls, and do no work at all*, Lev. 23. 29. *Whatſoever Soul ſhall not be Afflicted in that ſame day he ſhall be cut off from among his People.* Conſider the Corruptions of thy Heart, thy Natural Corruptions; conſider the Number of thy by-paſt ſins, and the weight of thy preſent remaining Corruptions, the wrath of God is kindled againſt thee for them, and the danger thy Soul is in of Hell, by reaſon of them. Conſider ſin in it's own Nature is the worſt of Evils, and the cauſe of all other Evils, 'tis the fouleſt thing in the World; yea, fouler than the Devil himſelf, for that made him foul; and could he be ſtript of his ſin, he would return to his Angelical Glory. Conſider it in the Cauſes, it had it's Original from the Devil himſelf; he was the firſt Sinner, and the cauſe of ſin in Men; and the Child very much reſembles the Father. Conſider the Law of God, of which ſin is a tranſgreſſion; 'tis Holy, Juſt, and Good, and no reaſon can be given why it ſhould not be Obeyed. Conſider the Perſon againſt whom thou ſinneſt, and it is againſt God himſelf, who is the chiefeſt Good; yea, the

the Fountain of all thy Mercies; One to whom thou oweſt thy ſelf, and all thou haſt; he that is thy Creator, and made thee; 'tis he that maintaineth thee at his own Coſt and Charges: One that is able to ſave thee, or deſtroy thee. Conſider it in the woful Effects of it, 'tis the Cauſe of all thy Judgments felt, or feared; yea, of Spiritual, Temporal, and Eternal Judgments: For the Wages of Sin is Death, but the Gift of God is Eternal Life. Conſider it in the price that was paid to free thy Soul from the Guilt, and filth of it, and that was the precious Blood of the Son of God, who loſt his Life to Ranſom Souls from the ſlavery of Satan, and his Blood to waſh away their ſcarlet ſins. The ſerious Conſideration of theſe things will much further thy Humiliation, and Soul-Affliction: And when thou haſt thus made thy Heart to bleed for thy ſins, go to God for a Plaiſter; but what good will a Plaiſter do before there is a Wound? Beg of him the Pardon of thy ſin; and not only ſo, but power againſt it: Renew thy Covenant with him of better Obedience, not only purpoſe, but promiſe amendment of Life; reſolve againſt ſin for the time to come: Every ſin thou confeſſeſt, let it be with a ſtrong reſolution to meddle no more with it. This is that Spiritual Faſt from ſin, which is every Chriſtians Duty; to Faſt from Food, and not from filthineſs; from pleaſure, and not from profaneſs; from ſleep, and not from ſin, is the Devils Faſt; ſuch Faſts he keeps, and ſuch

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will be kept in Hell: But the contrary was *David's* humbling of his Soul with Fasting, *Psal.* 69. 10. In which there must be a confession of sin, an Accusation for it, a detestation of it, and also self-condemnation. And though Prayer at all times should be fervent, yet especially now in such a Duty; this is called a Crying mightily unto God, *Joel* 1. 14. *Jonah* 3. 8. And thou shouldst bring Faith along with thee, believing thou shalt prevail, which may be grounded upon the many promises made to this Duty, and the Experiences we have in Scripture of the success *Jehoshaphat*, *Hezekiah*, *Esther*, *Nineveh*, and many other may witness; nay, where was it ever in Scripture faithfully performed without success? Alms-deeds also should be added, *Isa.* 58. 6, 7. Yea, we should testifie our Humiliation by our ready forgiving of others, and assisting those that stand in need. Beg also those many things that are wanting, for thy self, the Church, or State; and as in the Law, Sacrifices, and Offerings were given to God: Sacrifice thy sin to him, and Offer to him the Calves of thy Lips, Prayer and praise; Dedicate thy self a Living Sacrifice, and devote thy self to his Service.

5. *Direct.* The next thing considerable, is the time when this Duty is to be performed; and in this, as in other things, the *Papists* differ from us: They prescribe set times for Fasting, as necessary to be kept, and sinful if not observed. We hold that there are no such fixed

fixed times to be observed: But the Duty is incumbent on us as Occasions are offered. 'Tis true; there is mention made of a day, *Lev.* 16. 29. but this was Ceremonial, and ended with the rest of the Typs, and Shadows; and there is mention also made of the Fast in *the fifth and seventh Moneth*, Zach. 7. 5. And of the *fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth Moneth*, Zach. 8. 19. but this was during the Captivity, and so just occasion was offered for Publique Humiliation: but what is this to our business? We had the like every Moneth in times of War, and publick Calamity. And it is fit we should have upon such Occasions: But what is this to our stated times, whether Occasion be or no? When there is some great Judgment lying upon us, or some Eminent Danger hanging over our Heads, then 'tis a suitable time for this Exercise. We find in Scripture that there were Fasts kept by Believers in all Ages, upon emergent Occasions; thus *Samuel* and the People Fasted, and besought the Lord in their danger, 1 *Sam.* 7. 6, 7. And thus *David* besought the Lord by Prayer, and Fasting, for the Life of his Child, when it was Sick, 2 *Sam.* 12. 16. And thus he besought the Lord for *Jerusalem*, when a sore Judgment from God was upon it, 1 *Chron.* 21. 16. The Inhabitants of *Jabish Gilead* Fasted, and humbled themselves, when *Saul* and *Jonathan* were Slain, and *Israel* put to flight, 1 *Sam.* 31. 15. And *Jehosophat* in his Fear, Proclaims a Fast, when he knew not what to

do, yet had he his Eyes up to God, 2 *Chron.* 20. 3. And *Nehemiah*, when he heard of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, humbled himself by Fasting, *Nehem.* 1. 4. And *Esther*, and the *Jews*, when the Writings were Signed, and the time was set, when they should all have been destroyed, *Esther* 4. 1, 2, *&c.* And *Ezra*, when he apprehended danger at hand, *Ezra* 8. 21. Yea, this is the Course which the Lord himself Adviseth to in times of danger, or Publick Calamity, *Joel* 2. 12, 13. having threatned a sore Judgment; he adds, *Therefore now, saith the Lord, turn ye unto me with all your Hearts, and with Fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning, and rent your Hearts and not your Garments, and turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and Merciful,* &c. And this Course the *Ninivites* did take, and it succeeded, *Jonah* 3. 5. 8. Yea, *Ahab* humbled himself, when Judgment was threatned, and it was deferred in his days, 1 *Kings* 21. 27. Many more Instances might be given to prove times of Publique Calamity, seasonable times for this Duty. When Sin also abounds, 'tis a time for God's People to be Mourners in *Zion*, for assuredly Judgments will follow, *Ezek.* 9 4. 1 *Sam.* 7. 6, 7. *Psal.* 69. 10. *David* wept, and chastened his Soul with Fasting; for where Sin goes before unbewailed, Judgments necessarily follow after; and a Man may fore-see the Effect by the Cause; when such sins as usually bring Judgments are Acted amongst us, we may look for the

the like Effect; for like Sins bring like Plagues, *Lam.* 1.20. *I have grievouſly Rebelled*: And what follows? *Abroad the Sword bereaveth, at home there is as Death.* See alſo *Lam.* 2.17. *Jer.* 7.12. *Amos* 6.2, 3. And therefore in the prevailing of Sin, we have great cauſe to humble our Souls, and ſtand in the Gap to turn away the fierce Anger of the Lord, and never more Cauſe than at this day. Again; when thou findeſt thy Corruptions ſtrong, and thy Graces weak, or when thou findeſt ſome notable decay in thy Grace, 'tis time then to look about thee. As alſo when thou wouldſt beg any great thing at the Hands of God, go to him by Faſting, and Prayer: Thus *Daniel* begs the Deliverance of God's People out of *Babilon*, according to God's promiſe; he ſeeks to him by Faſting, and Prayer, *Dan.* 9. 1, 2, &c. & 10. 2, *&c.* For though God determine to do it, yet will he be ſought to, for ſo great a Mercy; and likewiſe when ſome Perſons are deſigned for ſome great work in Church, or Common-wealth, it hath uſually been done by Faſting and Prayer: Thus Chriſt ſpent a whole Night in Prayer, before he choſe his Diſciples, *Luke* 6.12. *Paul* and *Silas* were ſet apart by Faſting and Prayer, *Acts* 14.2, 3. And in Caſe of Spiritual deſertion, we ſhould thus ſeek to God, *Mat.* 9.14. And for the furtherance of ſome great Undertaking, *Eſther* 4.16. when Corruption is ſtrong, when Ordinary Food will not ſerve, we muſt uſe Phyſick. Some Sins, like ſome Devils, go not out but by Prayer

and Fasting: These are the times for this extraordinary Duty; but what is this to *Lent*, or Holy-day Eves, whereon the Papists keep their mock-fasts, but come not to humble their Souls for their Sins?

6. *Direct.* Propound a right End to thy self in this Duty of Fasting, or otherwise it will prove in vain, and be abominable in the Eyes of God. The *Jews* took it ill from God, that he regarded them not: *Wherefore have we Fasted*, say they, *and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our our Souls, and thou takest no notice?* Isa. 58. 3. *Behold, saith God, ye Fast for strife and Debate, and to strike with the fists of Wickedness*, &c. *Is it such a Fast that I have chosen*, &c. Zach. 7. 5. *When ye Fasted and Mourned in the fifth and seventh Moneth, even these seventy years, did ye at all Fast unto me, even to me*; Hos. 7. 14. *They have not cryed to me with their Hearts, when they howled upon their Beds; they assemble themselves for Corn and Wine, and they Rebel against me.* If the Heart be absent, God regards not the Service. The *Pharisees*, Mat. 6. 16, 17. they Fasted, but it was to be seen of Men, that others might look upon them, as of an austeer course of Life, and therefore had a reward from Men, not from God. The *Papists* make Merits their End; they Fast, and think to Merit Heaven by it: But alas! what can poor sinful Creatures Merit at the Hands of God, but Divine Indignation, and fierce Judgments? God may say of us, as of those, *Jer.* 14. 12. *When they Fast, I will not hear their*

their Cry; when they Offer Burnt-Offerings, and an Oblation, I will not accept them; but I will conſume them by the Sword, and by the Famine, and by the Peſtilence, Luke 18 12. *I Faſt twice in the week*, ſaith the *Phariſee*, yet the poor *Publican* was regarded before him: See alſo *Rom.* 14. 6. 1 *Cor.* 8 8. Alas! were Men but acquainted with their own Hearts, this conceit of Merit would ſoon vaniſh. Faſting, as I told you, is an indifferent thing, and only uſeful as it ſuits with the main End: *Bodily Exerciſe profiteth little, but Godlineſs is profitable to all things*, 1 Tim. 4. 7, 8. The true End of Faſting is either Ordinary, or Extraordinary, in both the Glory of God is intended: The Ordinary Ends are ſuch as theſe; the ſubduing the Fleſh, and bringing the Body into Subjection: Thus *Paul*, 1 Cor. 9. 27. *I bring under my Body, and bring it into ſubjection.* God's People have Fleſh as well as Spirit, and have need to uſe all means to ſubject it, that they may ſubdue their Corruption; and if Ordinary means will not do, Extraordinary muſt be uſed; if the Temptation remain, this Duty muſt be followed; and at length God will give ſtrength, and his Grace ſhall be ſufficient for us: This is the way to Corroborate, and ſtrengthen the Spirit, and enable it to perform the required Duties: This puts fervency into our Prayer, and enables us to Cry mightily to God. This way Men take ſome Revenge upon themſelves for their Sin, and for the abuſe of Mercies; by this means

a Man is better enabled to grapple with Temptations, and bring under Corruptions, and perform Duties of our General, and particular Calling more Heavenly: This is the way to stir up the Spirit of Prayer and Supplication, *Zach.* 12. 10. Thus the Prophetess *Anna* spent her time, *in Serving God with Fasting and Prayer, Night and Day*, Luke 2. 37. By Eating and Drinking, the Body becomes dull, and heavy, and unfit for Spiritual Duties; but by moderate abstinence it becomes more Active and Lively; and therefore Fasting and Prayer, are usually joyned together: For Fasting of it self doth little good: Fasting testifies our Humility, our grief, and sorrow for Sin, whereby we acknowledge our guilt before God, and our unworthiness of Meat, Drink, Sleep, Raiment, or other refreshing Comforts. Are these the Ends you aim at? Is this the Mark you shoot at? And the white that is in your Eye? 'Tis well, if it be, to make you fitter for the Service of the Lord, that you may do your Masters Will better, and wind up the Heart to an higher pitch of Holiness, and Heavenly mindedness: But if Custom, or Fashion, or the fear of Man, or popular Applause, or hopes of Meriting any thing from God, be your End, your Duty will be Curst, and blasted to you, and be returned Sin into your Bosom. The Extraordinary Ends we aim at in our Fasting, should be the removing of Evil felt, or feared; either Spiritual, or Temporal;

ral; from our selves, or others; the begging those Mercies we want, and the continuance of those we have, and fear to lose: These are the Ends the Godly have used these extraordinary Fastings for, and this hath been successful to these Ends; these are means of God's own prescribing, and promises are added of a good Success: And many Christians, for themselves, and others, have found a Comfortable return; and that which could not otherwise be obtained, hath been gotten by Prayer and Fasting: But our *Pharisaical*, or *Papistical* Fastings, our loose, careless mock-fasts, never did, nor never will prevail with God for any Mercy, or the removal of any Judgment.

7. *Direct.* In the last place, look to thy Carriage after the Duty, that thou demean thy self well; for thy work is not done when the Exercise is ended: Take heed of resting in the Duty, or trusting to the work done; this is *Popish*, this will make thee lose all thy Labour: 'Tis not the hanging down the Head, as God saith, like a Bulrush, for a day will serve thy turn. This, as other Duties, are to be used as *Boats*, or *Bridges* to help thee over to Christ; Men do not make Boats, or Bridges for their own sakes, or to look upon, but to make use of for the End they are suited to; make not Prayer the end of Prayer, or Fasting the end of Fasting: Use them not for their own sakes, but for Christ's sake, to get nearer to him by them; play not with the Stile,

or Ladder, but Climb up; Climb over by them. Take heed of Priding in the Duty, this is very inconſiſtent with it, if it be performed with enlargement; beware, leſt the Devil Fly-blow it: Pride is a Worm which breeds in the beſt Fruits of the Spirit; yea, in the Ruine of other Sins, even in Humility it ſelf: Men may be proud of their Humility; the Devil, like the Spider, can ſuck Poyſon out of the choiceſt Flowers: If thy Duties be thus fly-blown, they will not down with God; they ſtink in his Noſtrils, whatever conceit thou maiſt have of them. Examine alſo at the cloſe of the Duty, how thy Heart hath demeaned it ſelf in the Duty; if bad, thou haſt cauſe to be humbled, and make thy Heart ſmart for it; moſt Men, if they Examine any thing, 'tis the External part of the Duty; and are troubled more at a miſ-expreſſion in the Duty, than at the ſtraying, wandring of the thoughts, or the deadneſs of the Heart: But a Chriſtians work lies moſt within; he looks, as God doth, moſt upon the Heart, though the other be not to be diſregarded. If thy Heart hath carried it ſelf well, there is cauſe of thankfulneſs, none of Pride; for who made thee to differ? And what haſt thou that thou haſt not received? View but thy failings, and this may make thee vail thy Peacocks Plumes. Haſt got any ſtrength by the Duty, hold it faſt, and let it not go; art got any thing nearer to God, keep thy ſtation, and go not back; loſe not the ground

ground thou haſt gained by thy Duty: If thy Heart be heated, take heed of letting it cool again, the wind of the World will quickly do it; though the Exerciſe be over, let not thy Spiritual Fervour and Heat be over. *Elijah* walked in the ſtrength of a meals meat forty days; a Chriſtian ſhould exceed him, in ſuch extraordinary meals: What good will it do a Man to work hard all day, and have his work at Night as he found it in the Morning; and to travel hard, and at Night be where he ſet out. Maintain the ground thou haſt gotten in the Fight: Haſt thou put up Petitions to the Throne of Grace, mark how they ſpeed, that thou may behave thy ſelf accordingly: Moſt Men loſe their Prayers, as Boys do their Arrows, they mark not where they light; many know not whether God Anſwers them or no, nor ſcarce what they have asked. But thoſe that are burthened with the Sins they confeſs, and feel the want of the Mercies they deſire, take better heed. An Hungry, or a Thirſty Man, that begs for Meat, or Drink, can eaſily perceive, and tell you whether they had a Grant, or a Denial: Another that begs out of wantonneſs, not wants, heeds it not: A Man that deſires to have his Sores Cured, he obſerves how the Plaiſter ſuits with it; when a Beggar, that gains by his Sores, matters it not, though they never are healed. If God ſeem to deny thy Requeſt, 'tis time to Examine what is the matter; ſee whether it be Lawful, or Convenient, and if ſo, follow thy

thy Suit, give God no rest; he will first or last grant thy desire. Sometimes he deferrs to make his People Cry the louder; if it be a necessary thing, take no denyal, thy importunity will not Offend God, as we see in the Parable of the Importunate Widdow. Many Christians are short-winded, they can Pray but a turn or two, and then are out of breath, like the *Bethulians*, soon ready to faint: If thou pray against Sin, fight against it also, hate it, and detest it: 'Tis a vain thing to Imagine that God will subdue it without our endeavour: If thou pray for Mercy, work for it also, this is the way: And enter into Covenant with God to Live more Holily, and more humbly, and perform thy Covenant; *better not to Vow, than to Vow and not perform*, Eccl. 5. 5. If God grant thy Request, return thanks; Live thanks, as well as speak thanks: If he seem to deny, wait upon him in the use of means, and he will Answer in due time.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Directions for Days of Thanksgiving, or Holy Feasting.

THE next Duty which I shall mention, is Holy Feasting, which is no part of God's Worship, but is helpful to the Duty of Thanksgiving, as Fasting is to Humiliation; it hath been in use in the times of the Law, and is not useless in the times of the Gospel, where there is just Cause for such Spiritual Rejoycing. God in the Time of the Law appointed several Feasts to be Observed by the *Jews*, upon several Occasions. Some Daily, as the Morning and Evening Sacrifice; some Weekly, as the Sabbath, in Commemoration of the Work of Creation, and to Typifie out our Eternal Rest in Heaven. Some Occasionally, as the Thanksgiving of *Moses*, *Deborah*, and *Barak*, &c. Some Yearly; and these either greater or lesser Feasts; the greater Feasts were three; the *Passeover*, appointed to be kept in Memorial of *Israels* Deliverance out of *Egypt*, which Typically holds out our Deliverance by Christ, who was the true Pascal Lamb slain for the sins of the People; of this Feast we may read, *Exod.* 12. 1, *&c.* & 23. 15. *Ezek.* 42. 21. and elsewhere. The next was *Penticost*, which was observed fifty

fifty days after; wherein every Family Offered two Loaves of the first Fruits: This is called the Feast of Harvest, *Exod.* 23. 16. The third was the Feast of Tabernacles, Instituted in Memory, that the Children of *Israel* Lived forty Years in the Wilderness, and had no certain Dwelling Houses, but Lived in Tents, and yet God made Provision for them; and hereby they were Taught, and we may Learn, if we are Strangers and Pilgrims here, and have no constant abiding City, but expect one in the Spiritual *Canaan*; we may find this Feast mentioned, *Deut.* 16. 13. *Josh.* 7. 2. *Exod.* 23. 16. where 'tis called the Feast of In-gathering, at the end of the Year. At these three Feasts all the Males were Commanded to appear before the Lord, *Exod.* 23. 7. The Annual Feasts of lesser Account, were two; the Feast of Trumpets, and the Feast of Expiation, both mentioned. *Lev.* 23. 24. 27. In which also it was not allowed to do any Work; nay, it was forbidden upon pain of Death: Other Feasts were to be Observed after certain Years; for as every seventh day was Holy to the Lord, so was every seventh Year: For as Man and Beast was Commanded to Rest upon the seventh day; so the Land was to Rest every seventh Year, that it might gather Heart, and that the Poor of the Land might be fed of those things which the Earth did Naturally bring forth, without Labour; and after seven times seven Years, which is forty nine, the next, which is the fiftyeth Year,

Year, was the Jubilee, or Year of Gladness, wherein Debts were forgiven, Land sold, returned to the Owners, and *Hebrew* Servants were Released, and made Free, *Lev.* 25. 9. To which Christ seems to allude, *John* 4. 18, 19. who was sent to Preach the Acceptable Year of the Lord, *&c.* Some Festivals also were appointed by Man, upon great Occasions, and were Yearly Observed by the Church; as the Feast of *Purim*, Commanded by *Esther* the Queen, and *Mordecai* the *Jew*, upon the Account, and in Memorial of the Famous Deliverance of the Church in their time from the wicked Conspiracy of *Haman*, *Est.* 9. 17. And also the Feast of the *Dedication* of the Temple, either after the *Babylonish* Captivity, *Ezra* 6. 16. Or after it was polluted by *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and again Dedicated by *Machabeus*, 1 Mac. 4. 5, 6. Which Feast Christ himself seems to approve, by his Presence, *John* 10. 22. And in Gospel times we have our Feasts also; as every Seventh day for a Sabbath, of which I have already Treated: Several other Festivals in later Ages have been Observed, which Antienter Antiquity make no mention of, as several in Memory of Christ's Birth, Resurrection, Assention, *&c.* Several to our Lady, and many in Memory of Saints; of which I shall say no more, but what the Apostle doth, *Rom.* 14. 5, 6. *One Man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike, let every Man be perswaded fully in his own mind*, &c. Let us not Judge one another

another in those things; but were those observed as days of Thanksgiving ought to be, they would not be so eagerly contended for by some, nor so eagerly contended against by others. The Papists superstitiously forcing them upon us, as parts of Gods worship; and their Idol worship thereupon hath made some perhaps, run too far on the other side; but many spending them as Feasts to *Bacchus*, hath made many abhor the other occasional Feasts we have had, as the fifth of *November*, *&c.* commanded by Authority to be greatly observed, and others as occasion falls out; which if you would keep well, or any of the forementioned Holy-days, observe these Directions following.

1. *Direct.* If thou wouldest offer up to God a pleasing Sacrifice upon such a day as this is, get thy heart rightly qualified, and rightly prepared; there is bad Musick like to be where the Instrument is out of tune: this Duty is more difficult than Prayer; pinching wants, and eminent dangers, puts a Man on to prayer, as we see by the Mariners in *Jonah's* Ship; but self-denyal is required in praising him: ten *Lepers* could join in a petition for help, and but one returned to give thanks. Thy heart must be qualified with Grace, or thou canst not praise God upon such occasions as thou oughtest: for what hast thou to do to take the Word, or Name of God in thy Mouth, if thou hatest to be reformed, *Psal.* 50. 16. 'Tis every ones duty, for

for every one receives mercy, and 'tis a Rent due to the chief Land Lord, but every one cannot do it; *Praise is comely for the upright, Psal.* 38. 1. It should be a Congregation of Saints where God is praised, *Psal.* 149. 11. I do not perswade others from the Duty, no more than I do from Prayer, but perswade them to cleanse their hearts before they come to the Duty: for none but the Righteous can do the work of the day as they ought, neither indeed have they cause to rejoice when God is their Enemy; and for ought they know, they may Lodge next night in Hell: that rejoicing is the work of the day, is evident *Lev.* 23, 40. *Deut.* 12. 12. and many other places. These only are exhorted to rejoice, *Psal.* 33. 1. *Rejoice in the Lord ye Righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart. Phil.* 3. 1. & 4. 4. *Psal.* 107. 22. *Declare his works with rejoycing.* But how can we rejoyce, or praise God for Redemption, Vocation, Adoption, and the hope of glory, when we have no interest in them? Thy evidence must be cleared up, or thou art unfit for this Duty. Those, and those only, that have an interest in Christ, and a Title to Glory, assured to them, can eat their Bread with Joy, and drink their Wine with a merry heart: for God accepteth their works. Others may speak as much, and seem as confident, like the *Pharisee*; but there is a difference: the true Christian speaks humbly, the *Pharisee* proudly, and boastingly: the one is humbled for his remaining

ing corruption, the other brags, though no sin is kill'd. *Paul* cryes out, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of Death?* The Pharisee thanks God, he is not as other Men are, or as the Pulican: The one thanks God for what he hath, the other for what he never had. How oft may we hear Men give thanks, for their Election, Vocation, Sanctification, *&c.* when there is little appearance of it, when their lives evidence, that they are neither called, nor sanctified: the one praiseth God in pity to others, the other in contempt, *Phil.* 3. 8. To me who am less than the least of Saints, is this Grace given. I thank thee, saith the Pharisee I am not as other Men are: One returns thanks out of Custome, the other out of Conscience. For preparation to the work, dispose of, and lay aside, all thy Worldly occasions, as much as possible; that they interupt thee not in the work: and take daily notice of, and store up in thy Memory, what God hath done for thy Body, and for thy Soul, for thy Family and Relations, for the Land of thy Nativity; and the Church in general. How shall we praise God, if we neglect, and forget his benefits? *Psal.* 103. 2. his Works and wonders, *Psal.* 78. 7. this is commanded, *Psal.* 105. 5. *Exod.* 13. 8. The neglect of this is charged upon *Israel*, *Psal.* 78. 11. *they forgat his Works, and the Wonders that he shewed them*; and how many are deeply guilty of this fault? They heedlesly receive mercies, and take no notice whence

whence they come, or let them slip out of memory; even those they were sometimes affected with: and thou shouldest not only remember them, but meditate upon them, to affect thy heart with them; take notice of the mercy, justice, and goodness of God in them, value them according to their worth, as *Jacob* did *Gen.* 22. 9. 10. *Lord*, saith he, *I am less than the least of thy mercies, which thou hast shewed me*: for with my Staff I passed over this *Jordan*, and now I am become two Bands. *David* when he beheld the glorious Lamps of Heaven, the wonderful works of God, brake out into admiration, *Lord what is Man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man, that thou regardest him? Psal.* 8. 3. 4. Outward mercies, but especially Spiritual, should, & will affect the heart, if laid home by meditation.

2. *Direct.* When thou keepest a day, keep it to the Lord, and not to thy self. Let thy ultimate end and aim be Gods glory, and the main design thou drivest on be his praise: 'tis true in all Duties this should be regarded; but especially in this: for this Time is set apart meerly upon that account, to praise him with an inlarged heart; and if thou propound lower ends than these, God will not own thy work. These days are appointed to praise God, and not as many abuse them, and pamper the Flesh; 'tis the Apostles advice, and doubtless our Duty, 1. *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the praise and glory of God.* And if in our or-

dinary course we should drive on this design, much more in this extraordinary Duty, in so solemn a day, and exercise; here the joy of the Lord should fill the heart, Spiritual and not Carnal Joy, & the praise of the Lord should fill our Mouths, not vain laughter: we should speak out the great works of God, which he hath done for our Souls; and whatsoever suits not with this, is unsuitable for the occasion; but 'tis a sad thing, that many that pretend Conscience in the observation of Saints-days, blame all those thot look upon them as indifferent. I say, that those to whom honest Labour, at other times Lawful, is held a great Transgression, yet make no Conscience at all of serving God upon these days; but spend their time vainly, and prophanely, neither to the benefit of Soul, or Body. These think they serve God better at an Ale-house, at a Cock-pit, or Bear-baiting, or Stage-play; at Cards, or Dice, or other unlawful Games, than they can in an honest Calling: But is this the Feast that God hath chosen, to eat and drink, and rise up to play? This may serve turn, if we worshiped such an Idol as *Israel* then did, *Exod.* 32. 6. But shall we serve our God with such service, as the *Heathen* did *Baccus?* He is a Spirit, and must be worshiped in Spirit, and in Truth; and is eating and drinking, to Gluttony and Drunkenness this Spiritual Service that is commanded? Shall we praise God for his Creatures, by intemperance, and abuse of them? Yet are not these

these the Exercises of some of the greatest Sticklers for such Festivals? Look into an Ale-house, and see whether more meet not there upon such days as these, than the whole Week beside; and many an Oath sworn, and many a Lye told, and many a vain word spoken, at such times, and upon such occasions; yea, much Drunkenness, Debauchery, Quarrels, Fightings; and sometimes Murder, is there committtd. And is this Gods Feast, or the Devils Sacrifice? It more suits an *Heathen* Idol, than an holy God. Is this the place where God is like to meet thee? or wouldest have Death meet thee here? or is the Discourse of the Company suitable to the work of the Day, wilt thou thank God for thy Reason, when thou hast lost the use of it by drinking; and transformed thy self into a Beast? or canst then remember Gods benefits to praise him for them, when thou canst not remember what thou dost? 'Tis far from me to Judge any Man that keeps those days, as days of Thanksgiving ought to be kept: And 'tis far from me to approve of them as they are kept. I know the Godly are allowed to eat their Bread with Joy, and drink their Wine with a merry heart; but it is Spiritual, not Carnal Joy: They ought upon Thanksgiving days, to cease from their Labour; but that is not all, then they keep it but as a Beast: But as a Fast is a help to humiliation, and makes Prayers the more fervent; so Feasting in an holy manner elevates the Soul, and makes praises the more

hearty, when we freshly taste Gods goodness in the Provision made for us: Labour in both is forbidden, as 'tis an hindrance in the Duties in hand: but 'tis sad that God is more dishonored in those days pretended to be set apart to honour him in, than in all the days of the Year besides; but God will not own such Servants, nor accept of such Service, when Men think there is nothing but work forbidden upon that day, or nothing more than idleness required; but many would glorifie God much better in a Lawful Calling, than at an unlawful Exercise, or unnecessary Recreation. I know Recreation is Lawful, as I hope in due time and place to demonstrate and give Directions in it: But why should we take Gods time for our use? if these days be appropriated to Gods Service, let them be spent in his Service; if for our Recreation, let us never put the Title of Holy-days upon them, let them be left indifferent, to be used, or not used, at pleasure, or People kept from dishonouring God in them.

3. *Direct.* In the observation of these days see thy grounds be good, and that thou hast a lawful calling to it; or otherwise God will not own it. 'Tis true, Thanksgiving is a work of every day; but every day is not to be observed as an holy Festival to God: come not superstitiously to it, as the *Papists*, nor profanely, as the Sensualist, nor wickedly, as the profane Enmies to God, and Godliness: See thou be invited to it, by real mercies received; and in giving thanks, mistake not Judgements for

for Mercies, and Mercies for Judgments; 'tis, true, we ought to Observe all God's Providences, and Bless God for all Chastisements, as well as others, that is for the good which we receive by them, as *Job* 1.21. But this should be with Humiliation, not Exultation: If thy Foundation be rotten, the Building cannot be good; there are many that heartily rejoyce, and give thanks also to God, after their manner, for the downfall of the Church, and the extirpation of the Power of Godliness. I fear our times are not barren of Examples, of this Nature: This was the Sin of the *Ammonites*, and will be the Sin of those that are guilty, *Ezek.* 25.6. *Because thou hast clapped thy Hands, and stamped with thy Feet, and Rejoyced in thine Heart, with all despight against the Land of* Israel, *therefore I will stretch forth my hand against thee, and deliver thee for a spoil to the Heathen*, &c. See, God takes it ill, when Men exult over his People in distress; and if they praise him for Correcting them, 'tis unpleasing Service to him; his Ends are their Reformation, not their desolation, *Zach.* 1.15. *I am sorely displeased with the Heathen that are at ease, for I was but a very little displeased, and they helpt forward the Affliction*: There is a Prophetick Prayer put up against *Edom*, which in *Jerusalem's* Troubles Cryed, *Raze it, Raze it, even to the Foundations thereof*, Psal. 137.7. God made the King of *Assyria* a Rod in his Hand to Correct his People, but he intended to destroy them; but God threatens

when he hath done his work upon Mount *Sion, to punish the stout Heart of the King of* Assyria, *Isa.* 10. 5, &c. When Afflictions lye upon the Church of God, do not, with the Wicked cry *Aha, so would we have it,* Psal. 35. 25. These are mourning Times, and God expects that thou shouldest sympathize with them in their Suffering: When one Child is beaten, the other should not Rejoyce; they know not but their turn may be next: *If Judgment begin at the House of God, where shall the Wicked and ungodly appear?* Isa. 22. 12, 13. *In that day did the Lord of Hosts call to weeping, to mourning, to baldness, and to girding with Sack cloath, and behold Joy and Gladness, slaying Oxen, and killing Sheep,* &c. *But this Iniquity shall never be purged off till they dye, saith the Lord.* God also threatens those that Rejoyce in mourning times, *Amos* 6. 4, 5, 6, 7. Let the manner of the performance of this thankfulness be what it will, never so specious in the Eyes of Man, if the ground of thy rejoycing be the Ruine of the Church, the Affliction of the People of God, the extirpation of the power of Godliness, or the Liberty of Prophaness, or Increase of it; 'tis abominable in the sight of God, and thy Feast will please God no better than *Jezebels* Fast, where God's Laws were broken, under pretence of his Honour. The like pretence we may read, *Isa.* 66. 5. *Hear the Word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his Word, your Brethren that hate you, and cast you out for my sake, said, let the Lord*

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be Glorified, but he shall appear to your Joy, and their shame. Some think God is Glorified, when indeed he is dishonoured; Men shall kill you, saith Christ, and think they do God good Service: Oh, the mischie of Ignorance, and Superstition! But the Godly, in all Ages, have made the Flourishing of the Church, and the down-fall of implacable Enemies, the Cause of such Rejoycing; and not when one part of the Church ruins another, and imbrues their Hands in one anothers Blood; this is Cause of Lamentation. When *Israel* had destroyed their Brother *Benjamin*, though in a just Quarrel, and by God's appointment, yet they lift up their Voyce and wept, because one Tribe was Cut off, *Judg.* 21. 2. 6. And 'tis said, they Repented for their Brother *Benjamin*'s sake. 'Tis Cause of mourning when Protestants shed each others Blood, and the Enemies laugh at it, in their Sleeves: And for Personal Mercy, see it be such as God hath really given thee, and not like the *Pharisee*, for those thou hast not. As for Election, Redemption, Vocation, Justification, Sanctification, and the hopes of Glory, these well deserve thy greatest praise, but boast not of them before thou hast some good ground to believe thou hast them; God will not thank that Man, that thanks him for Gifts and Graces, which he never did, and, perhaps, never will bestow upon him.

4. *Direct.* As for thy Carriage upon such a day, it should not be such as Men Ordinarily

uſe upon their Feſtivals, or Holy-days, looſe, Propane, Idle, or Careleſs, but ſuch as is ſuitable to the Work in Hand, and helpful in the Praiſing, and magnifying God, which is the main Work of the day. Remember therefore into whoſe Preſence thou comeſt, and with whom thou haſt to do; apprehend him by the Eye of Faith, taking notice of thee, and deport thy ſelf accordingly; he knows thy Heart, and tries thy Reins, and knows thy Ends and Motives better than thy ſelf: Do nothing therefore un-beſeeming his Preſence, or which thou wouldſt not have him take notice of. And having, as before is directed, Treaſured up the Experiences of God's Mercies in thy Memory, and warmed thy Heart by Meditation upon them, and by this means Tuned thy Heart to his praiſes: When the day is come which is ſet apart, when thou wakeſt in the Morning, and it ſhould be betimes, (for thou haſt a great work to do) Conſecrate thy firſt thoughts to him, and let not the Devil, the World, nor Sin Rob him of that Honour; but begin the day by ſome warming Meditation ſuitable to the Occaſion, or by ſome Laudatory Ejaculation: Diſcourſe with him before thou Diſcourſe with the World, and raiſe thy Heart hereby to the higheſt pitch thou art able; for having diſpoſed thy Worldly buſineſs as much as poſſible, and ſet it out of thy way, that it interrupt thee not in thy Duties; behave thy ſelf as if thou hadſt nothing to look after but thy God,

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and thy Soul; Entertain not a thought, if possible, of them, till thy Work be done. 'Tis impossible to serve God as we ought in such a Duty in a Croud of Business; the whole Man is little enough, and too little for the Work; for thou wilt find it a harder Duty than Prayer: Thy own Necessities, self-love, and self-interest, may animate a Man to Prayer, but Praising God is a self-denying Duty; and though in some things thou maist take more Liberty than in a Fast, as in the Liberal use of the Creature; and in some things more than on a Sabbath, as in outward expressions of Joy; yet thy Heart should keep as close to God in this, as in any other Day, or Duty, and be as much inlarged to God: And though thou maist adorn thy self, and 'tis fit thou shouldest, yet beware of Priding in thy Cloaths, this is unsuitable to a self-denying Duty: And though thou maist eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and eat thy Bread with Joy, and drink thy Wine with a Merry Heart, yet immoderation is unlawful: Thou maist drink, to chearfulness, not to excess; to help thee in the Work, not to hinder thee in thy Duty: Prepare thy Heart in the Morning, as by Meditation, so by Prayer for Direction, and assistance in the Work; to gather in thy scatter'd thoughts and affections, and sequester them from the World, for the Service of the Day; and forget not to praise him for private and particular Mercies, which thou hast Received, for returns of Prayer, *&c. Jacob* did thus,

thus for Temporal, as well as Spiritual Favours, *Gen.* 32. 10. God would have us ſenſible of theſe as well as Church or State Mercies. Call alſo thy Family together in due time, Read ſome Scripture ſuitable to the occaſion, let them underſtand that they alſo are concerned in the Duties of the Day. Sing ſome *Pſalm* of praiſe to this purpoſe: *Let him that is merry ſing Pſalms*, James 5. 13. Praiſe God with them, and for them; and re-count to his Praiſe the many Family Mercies thou haſt received; take notice of your unworthineſs, the more to exalt the Mercies received: But Confeſſion of Sin, ſo as to Afflict the Soul with them, is not ſuitable to the day. Bring thy Family in due time to the Publick (if it be publickly Obſerved, otherwiſe carry it on in Private) and pay your Vows in the great Congregation; and behave your ſelves in the remaining part of the day, as be-you were Directed in the Obſervation of the Sabbath; for this time is Conſecrated, and made Holy to God, and ſhould be wholly ſpent in his Service: And thou ſhouldeſt be as careful of thy Thoughts, thy Words, and thy Affections, as though it were a Sabbath; for there is no danger of keeping them too intent upon God: When thou comeſt into the Congregation thou maiſt ſay, as *Jacob*, Gen. 28. 17. *This is no other but the Houſe of God, and the Gate of Heaven*; for here is done the work that ſhall be done in Heaven: As for the oher expreſſions of Joy, as Ringing of Bells, ſhooting

ing off Guns, making of Bone-fires, *&c.* they are so far Lawful, as they help forward the Work, and raise the Heart to an higher pitch of Joy, and rejoycing in the Lord.

5. *Direct.* Having thus disposed and prepared thy Heart for the Work, and set thy self as in the Presence of the ever-living God, that sees, and knows, and takes notice of thee; set thy self then upon the work, of Glorifying God, and render thanks to him from thy Heart, for all the Benefits thou hast Received; *Praise is comely for the Saints:* And this Religious Thankfulness, of which we speak, is thy Duty. Now, 'tis either External, or Internal; the Internal is to carry a thankful Heart to God, and this is every days Duty: External is, when the Thankfulness of the Heart is expressed in Words, or Actions; the former without the latter, is not sufficient; the latter without the former, is little worth. Now, the External manifestation of thy thankfulness, is either Private, or Publick; Private by thy self, or Family; Publick in the great Congregation; and this also is either Ordinary, or Extraordinary; Ordinary, and this should be done at every time when we come together to Worship of God: The Extraordinary is upon Extraordinary Occasions; as some great Deliverances, or the obtaining some great Mercies, or the bringing down some great Enemies of the Church; this the Church ought to bless God for, and Offer this Sacrifice of Praise in the Name, and Media-

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tion of Christ, who prays over all our Prayers for us, and Offers our Praises performed with the Incense of his own Righteousness. Now, 'tis requisite, as I said before, that a Catalogue of those Mercies, God hath given in as a return of Prayers, be laid up, either in a Book, or in the Memory; for if we neglect, or forget them, how shall we speak of them, to God's praise; 'tis not enough to remember them, but we must also mention them to his praise: Thus *David*, *I will tell you what God hath done for my Soul*: He acknowledgeth God the Author of his Mercies, and doth not *Sacrifice to his own Nets, as many do, and burn Incense to his Drags*, Hab. 1. 16. *But as the Church, not unto us, Lord, not to us, but to thy Name be the Praise*; he acknowledges frequently his own worthlessness, that he may exalt God. *Lord*, saith he, *what is Man, that thou shouldst be mindful of him? Or the Son of Man, that thou regardest him?* Psal. 8. 4. *I am less than the least of thy Mercies*, saith *Jacob*: *I am less than the least of thy Saints*, saith *Paul*. Yea, when it comes, let it be a Free-will Offering; do it chearfully, readily, willingly, as the Saints and Angels do it in Heaven, heartily, not heavily; God Loves a chearful giver, and matters not grumbling Service: Be as willing to return Thanks, as ever thou wast to have the Mercy. Set thy Heart on Work in this Duty, stir up thy self, like the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* 103. 1, *Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me Praise his Holy*

Holy Name: Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits. 'Tis not enough to Praise him with the Lips, or bring our Bodies before him, but the Heart and Life should Praise him; the Heart should Indite thy Praises, and thy Tongue utter them, and thy Life and Conversation Seal to them; thou shouldst do thanks, and Live thanks, as well as speak thanks; this is every days Duty, especially when we receive signal Mercies, we should return answerable thanks; when National Mercies, National thanks should be returned, *Psal.* 50. 15. *Moses* did so at the Deliverance at the Red Sea, *Exod.* 15. 1. *Deborah* and *Barak* did so, *Judg.* 5. 12. The *Jews* also, when delivered from *Haman*'s Plots, *Est.* 8. 11. 17. And there is great reason it should be so; for Praise is due to none but God, and to him the Vow should be performed; all our Springs are in him, and all our Mercies are from him; yea, every good and perfect gift, and this is the very End, for which he gives them, and 'tis all he requires for them; this Pepper-corn of Homage is all his Rent, who is the great Land-Lord; and though it be due from all, yet he expects it from his own People especially; he will extort his own from others in another way, and none but his People can do it to please him: This is to his Saints a fore-taste of Glory, where it must be their constant Work. 'Tis a beneficial Duty also, for Thanksgiving for one Mercy, is a real, yea, a prevailing Request for another; *Those*

that

that Offer praiſe, Glorifie God: And yet we ſee how negligent moſt are in this Duty; few take notice of the Mercies they Receive, but like Swine, eat the Acorns, or Crabs, and regard not whence they come: Ten Lepers were cleanſed, and but one returns thanks; many are ſenſible of their wants, and with the Horſe-Leach, cry, give, give; yet are not ſenſible of their enjoyments, to return thanks; yea, ſuffer ſome petty Croſs to hide a thouſand Bleſſings, and keep them out of their ſight.

6. *Direct.* When thou art thus prepared, thus fitted, go on in re-counting the Mercies thou haſt Received, and bleſs God for them; this is the main Work of the Day. Now, foraſmuch as Mercies are various, all Men receive not alike, yet all receive ſome, for which they ſhould be thankful; give me leave to lead you by the Hand a little, and ſhew you ſome, the reſt you may Obſerve your ſelves. Bleſs God for what he is in himſelf, and what he is to his Creatures; in himſelf, admire his Eſſence, for fathom it thou canſt not; the like we may ſay of his Attributes, his Eternity, Immutability, his Power, Wiſdom, Holineſs, Juſtice, and Truth, *&c.* Thou maiſt ſpend thy days alſo in Admiring him in the Works of his Hand; lift up thy Eyes to Heaven, and ſee the Sun, the Moon, and Stars, thoſe Glorious Lamps, thoſe Beauty ſpots of Heaven; obſerve their Diſtance, Courſes, Influence, and Virtues; and well thou

thou maist cry out, *Lord, what is Man*, &c. *Psal.* 8. 3, 4. Look upon the Earth hanging like a Ball in the open Air, stayed upon nothing; see how 'tis garnished with Trees, and Plants, and Herbs, and Flowers; Inhabited with a Hundred sorts of several Creatures, all Cared for by the great House-holder: Behold the Subserviency of one Creature to another, and every one seems rather made for another than himself; the Sun, and Moon, and Stars pour out their Influence on the Earth; the Earth again yields Grass, and Herbs, and Fruits, for Man, and Beast; the Beasts are for Food, or Service to Man; there is no Corner of Nature's Garden, but yields Matter of Admiration, and Praise also to God. The Works of his Providence also are full of Mystery, and Wonder, and may fill the Heart with Admiration, and the Mouth with Praises, to see how the World is Governed, and the Creatures all provided for: But especially Observe his Providence to his Church, in all Ages, which is a Bush on fire, and not consumed; Lambs in the midst of Wolves, and yet safe: See his Providence to *Noah*, when the whole World was drowned; to *Lot*, when *Sodom* was burnt; to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; to the Church in *Egypt*, and in the Wilderness: To *Joseph*, and to *David*; to the *Jews*, in *Haman*'s time; to the Apostles *Athanasius*, *Luther*, and generally down from the beginning of the World to this day; descend to our own Nation, how wonderful

hath

hath his Mercies been to us? How ſtrange was his bringing us out of Popiſh darkneſs? How wonderful his preſerving us from being reduced back again? How great his Deliverance from the *Spaniſh* Invaſion, and after from the Powder Treaſon, and many other Helliſh Plots, hatc'd in Hell, againſt God's People upon Earth: How hath he continued our Peace, our Plenty, our Health, our Liberty; yea, the Goſpel among us, notwithſtanding the Rage and Malice of the Devil, and his Inſtruments. If we conſider our own particular Mercies, and that as we are Men, or as we are Chriſtians: As a Man, thou art his Creature, and ſhouldſt bleſs him for thy Creation; he made thee of nothing, when he had no need of thee; he made thee a rational Creature, capable of Communion with himſelf, when he might have made thee a Dog, or Toad, or the moſt deſpicable Creature that ever fell out of his hands: And doth not this deſerve praiſe? He covered thee in thy Mothers womb, and through him thou waſt born: *David* bleſſeth him for that, *Pſal.* 139. 13. Thou waſt born in an Age of Light, under the Goſpel, thou mighteſt have been born in *Turky*, or *India*, or the moſt barbarous place in *America*; he provided for thee, when thou couldeſt not provide for thy ſelf: he gives thee Food and Raiment, and bleſſeth them to thy Uſe, without which they could not Feed thee, or keep thee warm: he hath given thee thy Limbs, and Senſes, when thou mighteſt have

have been blind, or lame; or deaf, or dumb: Thou hast thy health, and strength, thy wit and reason, when thou mightest have been upon thy Bed of Languishing, or running raging in the Streets; thou hast fire and water, two great Favours, were they wanted; thou hast the ground to tread upon, the Air to breath in, which thou hast not deserved; and many thousand other Mercies, and canst not yet see Cause to be thankful? Peace and Plenty, Health and Liberty, is given in to thee: But if thou art a Christian, thy Obligations are much more; thou shouldest then praise God for his Electing Love, when he past by thousands, and set his Love on thee; for sending his Son into the world, and for Christs Suffering for thy Sins; for his Redeeming of thee with his precious blood, for his Adopting thee to be his Child; his Calling, Sanctifying, and Justifying thee for the Grace he hath given thee, the promises he hath made to thee for the Gospel of his Son given to thee, for his Spirit to direct thee, his Ministers to teach thee, thy own Conscience to check thee, the Company of his Servants to encourage thee, and generally for all the helps thou hast in Heavens way, strength against Temptations, Corruptions, and Alurements. Now, Christian, canst see any Cause of thankfulness? Doubtless thou maist, especially if thou consider all this is given thee freely, without any desert on thy part.

7. *Direct.* Having sounded forth the

praiſes of God for his Mercy, which thou haſt Received from him, and bleſſed him for Church Mercies, for State Mercies, for Family, Relation, and Perſonal Mercies; thy next work is to go to God, to Petition him, for the continuance of thoſe Mercies, that are enjoyed, and granting thoſe that are yet wanting; for preventing the judgments feared, and begging the removal of thoſe that are felt; when thou haſt paid one Debt, and Cancelled one Obligation, thou maiſt go the bolder to borrow again. In private thou maiſt tell him what Sins thou wouldeſt have mortified, and what Graces ſtrengthened, and Increaſed; what Temptations vanquiſhed, what doubts reſolved, and what other wants thou wouldſt have ſupplyed, for thy ſelf, thy Family, thy Relations, and Friends, who lye under Sins, or Sufferings, or Temptations; as alſo for the place, where thou Sinneſt, the Nation of which thou art a Member: For the removal of the judgments felt, or feared; the continuance of the Mercies enjoyed, and the beſtowing of thoſe that are wanting: The Reformation of what is amiſs, in Church or State; the infatuating of the Counſels of blood-thirſty Enemies, the Continuance of the Goſpel in the power and purity of it; for a ſupply of Faithful Labourers in God's Harveſt, and a bleſſing upon their Endeavours; for a bleſſing upon the Government, upon the Kings Majeſty, and his Royal Relations, upon his Counſels, Magiſtrates, Miniſters, and all

all in Authority; for the preservation of the Land in Peace and Plenty, Health and Liberty, and for the Church in general: That God would protect them by his power, direct them by his Spirit, spread abroad the Gospel to the Ends of the Earth; make all the Kingdoms of the world the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ; that he would root out every Plant which he himself hath not Planted, and purge his Ordinance from every thing that offends, and bring down the Potent Enemies of Christ, and set Christ upon his Throne, and pull down the Throne of Anti-Christ, and bring in *Jews* and *Gentiles* to be one Fold, under one Shepherd *Jesus Christ* the Righteous, and finish those sinful days wherein we Live, And in the Conclusion, we should ingage our selves by Covenant, that if God shall give in a return to those our Requests, then will we praise and magnifie him, and devote our selves more to his Service; and in the Close of the Duty remember the Poor: This is also a necessary work of the Day, and that which God expects at our hands, as a testification of our Thankful hearts; and with what Conscience canst deny God this one Request, who hath bestowed so much upon thee? This was the Practice of the Saints in former times, upon such Occasions, *Esther* 9. 18, 19, 20. They made it a day of Feasting, and Gladness, when they were delivered from their Enemies; a good day, of Sending Portions one to another, and Gifts to the Poor:

The like we find, *Nehem.* 8. 10. *Go your way, eat the Fat, and drink the ſweet, and ſend Portions to them for whom nothing is provided, for this day is Holy to the Lord, neither be ye ſorry:* And we find in the following Verſes, it was done: To be Liberal handed to the Poor, is a Duty at all times, *Deut.* 15. 7. *Thou ſhalt not ſhut thy Hand againſt the Poor:* but eſpecially ſuch a time as this, that they alſo may rejoyce: A bleſſing is pronounced to thoſe that relieve them, and a promiſe added, *Pſal.* 41. 1. *Bleſſed is he that Conſidereth the Poor, the Lord will deliver him in the time of Trouble; but he that ſtops his Ears at the Cry of the Poor, ſhall Cry himſelf and not be heard,* Prov. 21. 13. God hath promiſed, *He that Releiveth the Poor ſhall not lack,* Prov. 28. 27. *He that hath pity on the Poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again,* Prov. 19. 17. *And he that hath this Worlds good, and ſeeth his Brother hath need, and ſhutteth up his Bowels of Compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* 1 John 3. 17. Neither ſhall ſuch ever Inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, *Mat.* 25. 41. 46. Take heed therefore thou neglect not this ſo neceſſary a Duty, leſt thou loſe all thy pains, which thou haſt taken. And when thou haſt cloſed up the Day in ſuch neceſſary Duties, as theſe are, and Commended thy ſelf, and Family unto the protection of God, yet know that thy work is not done, but thou muſt Live thanks, as well as ſpeak thanks; yea, the whole Courſe of thy Life

ſhould

should testifie thy thankful Heart. By this time, I suppose, you see these Holy Festivals are not so easie to be kept, as many have Imagined; and many great Zealots for Holy days, were they thus Observed, would have their Zeal to them much abated.

CHAP. XV.

Directions in Private Duties.

HAving already Discoursed of the Publick parts of Gods worship, which for the most part are performed in the Congregation; and given you Directions for the right performing of them, as God hath enabled me; I shall now in the Close of this Treatise, speak something of those private Duties that every Christian is bound to perform in their own Families, or Closets, when they are out of the great Congregation, for this is no less God's Worship than the former; and doth as much, nay, more demonstrate a Man to be a Christian, and Evidence the Truth of Grace, than the former; that is, a Christian that is so when no Eye, but the Eye of God is upon him. I shall Treat of these more briefly, because those Directions for Publick Worship already given, will many of them fall in to be ob-

ſerved here: 'Tis not enough to be a Chriſtian in Publick, when the Eyes of the World are upon thee, but in private alſo. A Hypocrite may be zealous abroad, that is looſe at home; Holy in the Congregation, and Prophane in the Cloſet; mindful of Publick Duties, forgetful of Private: But a true Chriſtian is *ſemper idem*, always the ſame, in all places, in all Companies, at all times, and in all Conditions; he is like clear water in a Glaſs, ſhake it as long as you will, it remains clear: But a Hypocrite by ſhaking diſcovers mud in the bottom; or like the Needle in the Compaſs, though it may be diſturbed by a jog, or ſhake, will never fix upon a wrong point. The *Phariſees* they loved to pray in the Temple, and in the Corners of the Streets, where they might be ſeen of Men, but there is no mention made of their Cloſet Duties; but Chriſt bids enter into the Cloſet, and ſhut the Door. Chriſtianity is a Race, in which we muſt run, whether we have Company or no; or whether Men behold us or no. A true Chriſtian is no ſooner in the ſtate of Grace, but he cries out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And thinks he can never do enough for Chriſt, that hath done ſo much for him; he knows he is not his own, but bought with a price, and therefore will Glorifie God, with his Body, and with his Soul, which are God's. When an Hypocrite Dedicates his Hands and Tongue to Chriſt, a true Chriſtian Dedicates his Heart: A Hypocrites work is moſt in ſight,

a true Christians is most in Secret; the Hypocrites is most abroad, the others is most at home; the Love of God constrains the one, and popular Applause drives on the other: A true Christian Devotes himself wholly to God's Service, and Serve him he will, not for a Reward only, but for Love, to him, and his Work; and will do his Duty, whatever danger, or difficulty lyes in his way; for as he draws out from Christ strength to perform every Duty, and bear every Affliction, so he draws out from Christ all the strength he hath in his Service; Heart, and Hand, and Tongue, and all shall be set on work for him; and he resolves he will serve him in Righteousness, and Holiness, all the days of his Life. 'Tis the Hypocrite that picks and chuseth his Duties; this he will do, and that he will not do; a true Christian takes Duties as they lye before him, and refuseth none for danger, or difficulty; private Duties go down with him as well as publick, he makes as much Conscience of Secret Duties, when no Eye, but the All-seeing Eye of God is upon him, as in publick, when the Congregation observes him. The Thoughts what Christ hath done, and Suffered for him, makes him think he can never do enough for Christ. 'Tis a true Token of a hard heart, when the Consideration of God's Mercy, and Christ's Sufferings, do not bend him to Duty; and of all the Judgments in the World, a hard heart is one of the greatest: Ah! what Cause have

Men therefore to look about them, who feel this Diſeaſe creeping upon them. The Scripture tells us, thoſe that are in Chriſt are new Creatures; that they have put on Chriſt, and live not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit; that they are dead to Sin, and alive to God; and have Crucified the World, with the Affections, and Luſts thereof: how then is their Aſſurance grounded, that conceit themſelves to be in Chriſt, and ſhall be ſaved, when none of all theſe things appear in them? nay though the contrary appear; though they live in Sin, and do the Devil's work: look to it betimes, God will not be mocked; his Servants ye are to whom ye obey, if ye ſuffer not with him, you will not Reign with him; as you Sow you ſhall Reap, God will have the heart, or nothing: if thou wilt to Heaven, thou muſt be a Chriſtian; and a Chriſtian thou canſt not be, but thou muſt be one in Private, as well as in Publick; which that thou may'ſt be, take theſe Directions for Private Duties.

1. *Direct.* The firſt Duty I ſhall mention, but not of leaſt concernment, is ſelf-examination. This indeed is private, for it is between thee and thine own heart. Be often enquiring at home, what ſtate thy Soul ſtands in to God; and what intereſt thou haſt in the Blood of Chriſt, and what Title to Heaven: this is a neceſſaiy, though much neglected Duty. Many that caſt up their Shops, to ſee whether they grow, or decreaſe in the World; and try their Evidences for their Lands,

Lands, to ſee that they are good; take not ſo much pains for the Soul, to ſee whether all be well there. Union, and Communion with God, is a Chriſtians chiefeſt happineſs; and without this, there can be no felicity, though we have the influence of all Earthly enjoyments: yea, though we had the Honours, Riches, and Pleaſures, of a thouſand Worlds: for all theſe end in a Snuff, and will prove vaniſhing, fading, tranſitory things. The Soul of Man is a precious Piece, and therefore ſhould be moſt regarded. 'Tis next to the Angels, the chiefeſt Piece that ever droped out of the hands of God, and was made in his own Image; and the nearer any thing comes to the Image of God, the nearer it comes to perfection: for God is Perfection it ſelf. 'Tis the greateſt Purchaſe of the Blood of Chriſt, that which was of Infinite Value, more worth than the World, was given to redeem it; and Chriſt knew well enough the worth of Souls: and would not give ſuch a Rate for a thing of little worth. In a word, 'tis Eternal, and ſhall laſt for ever; and run parallel with the longeſt Line of Eternity, and therefore pretious: the vanity of Earthly enjoyments is ſeen in this, as well as other things, it's uncertain, and momentary duration. Now this pretious and Immortal Piece, is in great danger; and without our care, diligence, and pains, is like to be loſt: a thouſand Enemies beſege it, and ſet it round, Enemies without, and within, and on every ſide:

ſide: without the Devil, and the World, who ſpread a thouſand Snares to intrap it: within, Corruptions, yea an inbred Traytor; a falſe, perfideous, treacherous, and deceitful heart: theſe are Politick, Subtile, Crafty, and malicious Enemies. The Devil will make no peace with us, but upon worſe conditions, than *Nahaſh* the *Amonite* offered to the Men of *Jabiſh Gillead*, 1. *Sam.* 11. 2. *Upon this condition will I make a Covenant with you; that I may thruſt out all your right Eyes, and lay it for a Reproach upon all* Iſrael: but his conditions are the everlaſting deſtruction of Soul and Body; and if the Soul be once loſt, thou art undone for ever; a thouſand Worlds cannot redeem it, though they were turned into a heap of Diamonds, or a Globe of Gold: Now, art thou a rational Creature? and canſt thou ſee thy ſelf, thy better part, in ſo much danger, and art not ſenſible of it? wilt thou ſo regard a Limb, or Sence, an Eye, or a Tooth, and ſhall the Soul be unregarded? wilt thou Conſult the Lawyer about thy Eſtate, the Phyſitian about thy Health, yea the Farrier about thy Horſes; and ſhall thy Soul be neglected? God forbid: Wilt take care for Trifles, and neglect things of greateſt concernment; what greater note of a Fool can be expreſſed? God is yet calling thee, and the Door of Mercy is not yet ſhut againſt thee, opportunities are yet offered thee, and there is yet hopes; but how long it may continue thou knoweſt not: up and be doing, make

make ſure of Heaven while it may be had; one of theſe days it will be too late: examine thy ſelf by the Word of God, cleanſe the Fountain, that the Streams may be clear; ſtub up the Root of Sin, when others are Lopping at the Branches; begin Reformation at the right end. I ſhould here have given you ſome Motives, Rules, Directions, Marks, and Characters; to this purpoſe, to guide you in this difficult work, but this I have done already in another Treatiſe of that Subject, called *the Souls Looking-Glaſs*, to which I referr you, if you have no better at hand. Yea when by Examination thou knoweſt the truth of thy Grace, yet is not Examination uſeleſs; but conſider the Growth of it alſo: true Grace is of a growing Nature, like a Grain of Muſtard-Seed; that in time becomes a great Tree: thy Growth ſhould be in ſome meaſure anſwerable to the Food thou eateſt, the means of Grace thou enjoyeſt: that which ſtands at a ſtay, or declines, may be ſuſpected 'tis not true; 'tis a Monſter in Nature, that is no bigger at twenty Years old, than at two; 'tis ſad when Men that ſhould grow, decline, and loſe their firſt love: if this be thy caſe, conſider from whence thou art fallen, and do thy firſt work; conſider who thou leaveſt, and whither thou goeſt, and what will be the Iſſue of it; at leaſt conſider what thou doſt, which no Hypocrite in the World can do: and never give thy ſelf any reſt, till thou knoweſt that thou outſtrip'ſt them all; yea, till

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thou canſt Read thy Name Written in the Book of Life, and canſt call God Father; and ſay with the Spouſe, *my Beloved is mine, and I am his, Cant.* 6. 3.

2. *Direct.* The next Private Duty is, when thou knoweſt that thou haſt an Intereſt in God, and a Title to Glory; and canſt without check of Conſcience, call God thy Father, and Chriſt thy Head and Husband: be ſure then to keep cloſe to him, hold him faſt, and do not let him go, like the Spouſe, *Cant.* 3. 4. 'Tis ſaid of *Enoch* and *Noah*, that they Walked with God; and thus in ſome meaſure doth every faithful Soul, and this is the ſureſt, ſafeſt, courſe thou canſt take: for there is none can hurt thee when thou art under his Wing, no Enemy can moleſt thee, while thou art under his Tuition; trouble never grinds a Man, till it finds him from God; take heed of growing ſtrange with God: if thou ſuffer him to be gone, thou may'ſt ſeek him ſorrowing, and not find him. Many that are conſtant in Publick Duties, are defective in Private; but 'tis Secret Duties, that chiefly maintains Communion with God: in thoſe it is we moſt ingage our hearts to God, and God to us: now if thou wouldeſt keep this Communion with God, ſome things are to be avoided, ſome things done: The things to be avoided are eſpecially Sins, but above all, our Boſome Sins, thoſe that thou art moſt inclined to, and moſt eaſieſt yeilds to; and canſt moſt hardly ſay nay: theſe God is moſt Jealous of,

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and these will make the greatest breach between God and the Soul; and most havock among thy Graces; these are they that most deeply wound the Conscience, break thy Peace with thy God; and if not forsaken, will procure a Bill of Divorce: 'tis thy Sins which is the cause of all Judgement, Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal; and withhold Mercies from thee: The love of Sin, and close walking with God, cannot stand together. Sin is to Holy Spiritual Communion with God, as Water is to Fire, of an extinguishing Nature: take heed therefore of the beginning of it; brush and dash *Babylon*'s Children when they are young, and the Cockatrice Eggs, before they break forth into Serpents: entertain not a delightful thought of any Sin, resist the first motions of Sin, avoid all the occasions, repell the Temptations, and beware of the appearances of Evil; and get as far from it as possibly thou canst: for God, and Sin cannot be entertained, and Lodge together in one Soul; thou must either break thy Peace with the one, or with the other of these irrevocable Enemies: thou canst not serve God and Mammon: all Sin is of this nature, yet some Sins are more abominable than others, as Worldly-mindedness, this will choak all that is good in thee; it were the Cares of the World, and the deceitfulness of Riches, that choaked the Word, and it became unfruitful, *Mat.* 13. 22. Pride also, is a damning Sin; and makes

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a Man ſet himſelf in the place of God, and ſet up his own will for his Rule: this turned *Angels* out of Heaven, *Adam* out of Paradice, and many into Hell. Idolatry alſo is abominable, when Men ſet up other Gods, and ſerve them, God will not take it at their hands: many more there are, of which we muſt be careful: Some things likewiſe are to be done, yea every Duty adds ſome ſtrength, and helps forward this Communion: Private Meditations, and Private Prayers, are excellent helps to this end: Meditation is an excellent help hereunto. Ah what ſweet, and delightful taſts of of God may a Man have, that Exerciſeth himſelf in this Soul-fatting Duty: Such a Man can find God in every Creature; and like the *Bee*, ſuck ſweetneſs from every Weed, and Flower; he can get advantage by Proſperity, and Adverſity, Health, and Sickneſs; yea every thing he knows, ſees, or hears of: yea every Creature will lead ſuch a Man to God, and Teach him ſome Leſſon worth his Learning: for as by the Vein the Mineral may be found, or as the Stream leads to the Fountain, ſo every thing leads to God; and points out his Power, Wiſdome, and Goodneſs; yea the conſideration and thoughts of Gods Attributes, Word, and Works, may fill the Soul with admiration, and make a Man fall in love with God; every Chapter, Verſe, and Line, of Holy Writ, is as a Ladder to lift thee nearer Heaven, and draw thee nearer unto God

God: such a Man knows how to Spiritualise every Evil and Morall Action; and what ever he doth, he can Ingage God for to reward him: he can suck sweetness out of all cross Providences, and when God seems to frown, can turn the Curtain aside, and see his pleased Face; and view his Love in the dark Passages of his Providence. Another means to maintain Communion is Secret Prayer, when the Soul can power out it self into the Bosome of Christ, with Faith and Fervency; who hath promised to grant whatever they ask in his Name: Ah what sweet Crumbs of Comfort, doth many feel coming from Christ in such a Suit, when a Man spreads his Case, and Complaint before Christ, as somtimes *Hezekiah* did the Blasphemous Letter: how doth this Ingage God in his Cause, if thou maintainest Life in these two Duties, thou wilt maintain Communion with God, and Life in thy Soul?

3. *Direct.* Another Duty Incumbent upon thy Soul, is to store thy heart with knowledge, and understanding; without the which *the mind cannot be good*, *Prov.* 19. 2. and this is done in Private, as well as Publick; partly by Reading and Conference: Reading the Scriptures and other good Books, this will notably encrease knowledge and understanding; but this I have already given Directions in, and desire thee to make use of them. Meditation also is a fruitful Duty; even that which is occasional: whereby thou mayst gather Observations, and learn many Lessons for

for thy Souls good, from every Creature thou haſt to deal with; but this I have already treated of: but this is not all, but if thou art Converted, ſtrengthen thy Brethren: we were not Born for our ſelves. If thou haſt a Family, ſtuddy and endeavour their Converſion alſo; teacheh them in the way they ſhould walk: for to that purpoſe God hath given thee Authority over them; thou art a King, a Prieſt, and a Prophet, in thine own Houſe: Rule then in thy Family, as a King, Inſtruct as a Prophet, and Pray amongſt them as a Prieſt; God will be ſerved in thy Family, as well as in thy Cloſet, or in the Publick: therefore, ſomtimes, Particular Houſes are called Churches; becauſe in them God is Worſhiped: To this End prepare then what thou canſt, for the Publick Ordinance, by Inſtruction, Admonition, and Encouragement; remove what rubs thou canſt out of their way, to believing, and obeying; ſhew them the neceſſity of Faith in Chriſt, and obedience to Chriſt; and if thou canſt help it, let none ſerve thee, that will not ſerve God; this was *Davids* reſolution, *Pſal.* 101. 2. *&c.* Require an Account at their hands, what they learn, and what benefit they receive: preſs theſe things more upon their Spirits, and faſten it upon their Mind, that it may not be let ſlip, by repeating the Sermons, or ſo much of it as ſhall be neceſſary, for their good; and preſs home, and drive at what the Miniſter drives at in his Sermon: Reading the Scripture

ture, also is an useful means to encrease knowledge, in thy self and Family; and should be done in Private in thy Family, and in Secret by thy self; redeem time to this End, and if possible, make them understand what they Read, drive the Nail to the Head; this is the way to expell Ignorance, and to get Knowledge: this cannot but work some Knowledge in the hearts of them that hear it. In this Word is contained the Will of God, concerning Mans Obedience: and here is a Legacy left us by our Fathers Will, the Promises which are our Evidences for Heaven; and all we have to shew for Glory: and shall this be neglected by us, or meanly esteemed. Some may Object they have long tryed this means, and see little profit by it; but do thy Duty, and leave the success to God. *Paul* may Plant, and *Apollos* Water; but God gives the encrease: yet there must be Planting, and Watering, or good Fruit cannot be expected; God serves his Providence, by the use of means: The *Bereans* were commended for searching the Scriptures: and Christ himself commends this Lesson to the Pharisees: this Book of the Law should not depart out of thy Mouth, but thou shouldest Meditate therein for ever, *Josh.* 18. *Psal.* 12. *This Word of God should dwell plentiously in you*, *Col* 3. 16. It was *Abraham*'s Practice to teach his Children, and Servants the fear of the Lord, *Gen.* 18. 19. This also is *Pauls* Counsell, *Eph.* 6. 4. Yea, and God's own Command, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7.

The Words that I Command thee this day, ſhall be in thy Heart, and thou ſhalt Teach them diligently unto thy Children; thou ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thy Houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way; when thou lyeſt down, and when thou riſeſt up, &c. Firſt, get them in thy Heart, and all the reſt will be eaſie; and there is great Reaſon for it: Thy Children have Received a Poyſonful Nature from thee, and thou haſt Dedicated them to God's Service in their Baptiſm; and all the Reaſon in the World thou ſhouldſt do thine Endeavour to bring them out of this miſerable Condition, and do what thou canſt to make them the Faithful Servants of God: Their Souls are precious pieces, too good to be the Devils Drudges; and thou that canſt not endure to ſee a ſilly Lamb, in the Mouth of a devouring Lyon, rending, and tearing it in pieces at his pleaſure, how canſt thou endure to ſee thy own Children in the Devils Hand, likely to Torment them for ever, and not be troubled? Set thy Hands therefore to the Work, and by Catechiſing, Inſtructions, Exhortation, and Admonition, to work knowledge in them, and bring them to Conſider their ways, for Conſideration is the firſt ſtep to Reformation: Aſſure thy ſelf God requires this Private Duty at thy Hands.

4. *Direct.* Another Private Duty, in reference to thy Family, is to Pray with them, and for them, and to joyn together in the mutual Praiſes of God. I have already Treated of

of the Duty of Prayer in general, and have given Directions in the managing well the Duty; look back upon them, and take the Directions, I ſhall now preſs upon thee as thou art an Houſholder: and 'tis no doubt but Secret Prayer is thy Duty, becauſe thou haſt Secret Sins to Confeſs that none knows of but God, and thine own Soul; and Secret wants to beg ſupplyes for, and Perſonal Mercies to be thankful for. But though this be neceſſary, 'tis not ſufficient; but if thou have a Family, theſe alſo muſt ſhare in thy Prayers: There is a Divine Imprecation againſt all thoſe Families that call not upon the Name of God. Now, this Duty ſhould be daily done; yea, Evening, and Morning, I think may Evidently be proved; that 'tis a daily Duty cannot be denyed: The Scripture requires us to pray without ceaſing, to pray continually, and in every thing to give thanks, and ſuch like expreſſions; intimating to us, that our Souls ſhould be in a continual Praying Temper, and upon all Occaſions Offered, ready to perform this Duty; and we ought to Serve God all the days of our Lives in Righteouſneſs, and Holineſs, *Luke* 1. 75. Now, Prayer and Praiſe is part of that daily Service we owe to him, which is alſo Typified out by the daily Sacrifices, and Oblations, which were Offered to him in the Time of the Law; Chriſtians Prayer and Praiſe being in alluſion to this, called, the *Offering up the Calves of our Lips*, Hoſ. 4. 2. And when Chriſt Teacheth his

Disciples to Pray, he bids them say, *Give us this day our daily Bread*, which shews us thus much, that it was to be their daily Petition, *Acts* 3. 1. We Read, that the Apostles went into the Temple at the hour of Prayer, which shews they had their *Stata precibus tempora*, their appointed hours. And the Godly in all Ages have made Prayer their daily Practice: *David* he Prays seven times a day, *Psal.* 119. 164. *Morning and Evening*, Psal. 92. 2. *Morning, Evening, and at Noon*, Psal. 55. 17. Yea, elsewhere at Midnight. *Daniel* Prayed three times a day constantly; yea, when Death was threatned for so doing, *Dan.* 6. 10. And there is great reason for it, for we Receive daily Mercies, for which we have cause to be thankful; and Commit daily sins, for which we have cause to be humbled; and we have need of daily Supplyes, for which we have cause to be earnest: And God hath given us leave to come as oft as we will, and promiseth to hear us, and supply us: What a needless scruple then is it to ask whether it be our Duty, when 'tis our Priviledge, as well as our Duty; we do not ask, how prove you it to be our Duty to eat Meat every day, this would Argue but a bad Stomack: The oftner we come to God, the better welcom we shall be, and have more Communion, and Converse with him; and the more we Converse with him the better Entertainment we are like to have. Others Scruple, whether a Man ought to pray in his Family; these Men would fain

ſain find a knot in a Ruſh, and would Quarrel the Duty they like not; but doth not God tell us, *Where two or three are gathered together, he will be in the midſt of them*, Mat. 18. 20. And are not ſome Families called Churches of God, where Religious Exerciſes are performed, *Rom.* 16. 5. *Col.* 4. 15. *Philem.* 2. Here the Houſes of *Priſcilla*, and *Aquila*, and *Nymphas*, and *Philemon*, are called Churches. And *Joſhua* reſolves that he, and his Houſe would ſerve the Lord, *Joſh.* 24. 15. And we read of Chriſt praying with his Diſciples, and others: What ground of doubt can then remain, but this is a Duty? Thoſe that ſhake off this, would willingly ſhake off all the Ordinances, and the reſt of the Commands. In a Family are many particular Family-ſins Committed, which ought to be Confeſſed; many Family Mercies beſtowed, which call for a thankful acknowledgment; many wants, and Infirmities to be ſupplyed, which ſhould be begged; and all theſe cannot be known, nor, perhaps, are fit to be expreſſed by him, that is the Mouth of the People in publick; and for Morning, and Evening, theſe times ſeem fitteſt for this Duty, though ſome Quarrel this alſo: God himſelf in the time of the Law appointed theſe for Sacrifices, and Oblations; and Reaſon ſpeaks it fit that in the Morning we ſhould praiſe God for the Mercies of the Night, and pray for a bleſſing upon the buſineſs of the day; and at Even confeſs the ſins of the day, and be thankful for

the Mercies; and Commend our ſelves into the Protection of God the Night following: For as all we have is from him, ſo we ſhould bleſs God for all, but Spiritual Mercy ſhould not be forgotten, eſpecially for Chriſt, and the work of our Redemption; the means of Grace, and the motions of the Spirit: We ſhould praiſe the Lord alſo with *Pſalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*; this is a private Family Duty: Alſo the want of theſe Duties expoſe us to the threatning, *Jer.* 10. 25.

5. *Direct.* Another private Duty which lyes upon thee in reference to thy Family, and thoſe under thy Charge, is reproving them when they ſin, and Correcting them when they will not amend, and reſtraining them what in thee lyes, from breaking God's Laws, and Divine Commands: Thou art God's Vice-gerent in thy Family, and beareſt his Image, and the ſtamp of Authority is put upon thee, and muſt Imitate God in thy Government ſo far as thy Commiſſion reaches; though thou haſt not the power of Life and Death, as the Supreme Magiſtrate, yet haſt thou a reſtraining power; yea, and if need be, the power to Correct, ſo that it reach not to Life, nor Limb; and doubtleſs *Joſhua* intended to put this power in Exerciſe, when he reſolvedly promiſed, that he and his Houſe ſhould Serve the Lord, *Joſh.* 20. 15. Yet alas! how many Governours of Families neglect this Duty. Some are debarr'd from it by their own guilt, being guilty of the ſame ſins they ſhould

should reprove in others; this stops their Mouths, and makes them neglect their Duty. These Men do more hurt by their Example, than ever they are like to do by their reproofs; their way is therefore first to cast out the beam out of their own Eye, and then to seek to pluck out the Mote out of anothers. But I speak chiefly to those that seem to make some Conscience of their Duty, for with those I am likelieſt to prevail; and these also many of them are extremely negligent, and have need of a sharp Reproof themselves. Friends, do you verily believe, that ungodly Livers shall go to Hell, and being once there, are in an irrecoverable lost Condition? And can you suffer such among you, that are like to suffer the Torments of Eternal Fire, and hold your Tongues, and never give them warning of their Danger? What an uncharitable thing is this, that you will suffer those that are in near Relation to you, perhaps, the Wife of your Bosom, or the Children of your own Bowels, to lye in such a desperate danger, and never warn them of it. If thou saweſt a Blind Man upon the brow of an Hill, ready to break his Neck; or a Mad Man ready to kill himself, thou wouldeſt call to the one, and warn him of the danger, and restrain the other if thou wert able; and wilt thou have Compassion on the Body, and no pity on the Soul? Shouldeſt thou see thy near Relations coming to the Gallows, and mighteſt save their Lives for a few words speaking, wouldeſt be so uncharitable

as to hold thy peace? were one of thy Intimate Friends in Hell, and were there a possibility of their Delivery; wouldest thou not go, and ride, and speak, and pray, (supposing this were the way) in their behalf, and for their sake? And wilt thou let them quietly go on in that way, that certainly tends thither, and never shew them the danger they are in? A vicious Life, without Repentance, will as certainly lead to Hell, as God is God, and the Scriptures are the word of God; for no unclean thing shall ever enter Heaven, no dirty Dog shall tread upon that Pavement; Didst thou certainly know that thy Wife, or Friend, or near Relation were in Hell, and yet there were hopes of their Recovery, if thou wouldst be at some pains, or at some Cost; what an uncharitable part would it be in thee, to let them lye for ever, and for ever in those Infernal Flames, and not seek their ease; and wilt neglect it now when it may possibly be prevented. Were but thy Wife, or Child in *Turkish* Slavery, thou wouldest pray, and intreat, and more than this for their Liberty. What tender heart could indure to see another in raging Torments, yet this will be the Condition of thy bosome Friends, if un-regenerate. Dost thou see the Devil leading them Captive at his pleasure, & hast thou nothing at all to say against it? It may be thou Prayest for their Conversion, and wilt not speak a word to this purpose? What dissembling is this, and what mocking of God?

If

If there be a desire, it will be joyned with endeavours: Shouldest thou see thy Friend in a Pit, ready to be drowned, wouldst thou fall upon thy knees, and Pray for help, and not put forth thy hand to help him? This would seem little Love: God will have means used to serve his Providence. It may be thou fearest troubling them; but 'tis a Foolish Physitian that suffers his Patient to dye under his hand, rather than trouble him; in a Swoon we shake, and rub, and, pinch, and use other means, which, perhaps may hurt them. The *Papists* are more Charitable in their blind Devotion, how dear do they pay for *Masses*, *Dirges*, &c. for the Delivery of their Deceased Friends Souls out of their feigned Purgatory. But if your Charity to others be so cold, yet at least be Charitable to thy self, and bring not the blood of others Souls upon thy Account; the Sins which thou maist hinder, and dost not, will be laid at thy Door, and the Blood of those Souls that perish through thy neglect, will be Charged upon thee; carefully therefore set upon this Duty.

6. *Direct.* Thou must not only reprove them when they do amiss, and chastise them when they will not reform, but thou must also Instruct, Teach, and Admonish them to do good, and encourage them in well doing, and Teach them the Duties they should do; 'tis not enough to leave the Evil, but they must do the good; good Duties are required to be done, as well as Sins to be avoided.

Now,

Now, the beſt way to Teach them, is by Example; be a Pattern to them of an Holy Life, and well-doing; moſt Men Learn better by Example, than Precept. A Man may lead an Hundred, that cannot drive two: Let not thy Practice croſs thy Exhortation or Reproof, let them ſee by thy Example, that thou ſpeakeſt from thy Heart. If thou preſs them to an Holy Life, and Liveſt looſely, and prophanely thy ſelf in the mean time, they will think thou art in Jeſt with them, and thinkeſt not what thou ſpeakeſt. Oh, how many good words may you hear from ſome Men in an humour, when there is not one good Action to be ſeen; theſe come not from the Heart, but from the Brain: That Exhortation is a Duty, is ſeen by *Abrahams* Practice, and God's Command, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7, 8. *Prov.* 22. 6. *Eph.* 6. 4. And there is good Reaſon for it: Thy Children have their defilement from thee, and derived a Poyſonful Nature from thy Loyns, and were the Children of Wrath, as ſoon as they were thy Children; and thou that haſt thus defiled them, is it not reaſon thou ſhouldſt help to make them clean? They are near, and dear to thee, part of thy ſelf, of thy Fleſh, and of thy Bones; did they not come out of thine own Bowels? And they have none in the World ſo near to look after them as thy ſelf, and wilt thou neglect them alſo? Shall they periſh for want of Inſtruction, and Direction in Heavens way? Thou wouldſt Inſtruct them how to Live in the World; and, if

if thou couldeſt, how to grow Rich and Honourable, and wilt neglect them in the main thing, how to be happy? Thou canſt moil, and toyl, and cark, and care, and riſe early, and lye down late, and eat the Bread of carefulneſs, for their ſakes, to get an Eſtate for them; and thinkeſt thou haſt never enough: and is thy care only extended to the Body; is the Soul of no Value? doſt not matter ſo they be Famous in the World, though they are Infamous in God's Account? and their Souls be eternally loſt? were their Bodies Diſeaſed, thou wouldeſt conſult the Phyſitian; if their Eſtates were in hazard, the Lawyer: and ſhall the Soul bleed to Eternal death, without remedy, or regard? they may curſe the time that they were Born of ſuch unnatural Parents: They are Naturally Ignorant, and they muſt be taught; they are Corrupt, and muſt be amended, or they will be undone: Oh, conſider what will become of thy Children an Hundred Thouſand Years hence; they will be, either in Heaven, or Hell, in endleſs Torments, or Eternal Joys: and 'tis much to be feared they will miſcarry. Were they but in Slavery, thou wouldeſt ſeek their Liberty; and wilt thou do nothing to help them out of Spiritual Thraldome? what comfort maiſt thou have of them if thou prevail, and be Inſtrumental of their Converſion? how wilt thou Ingage them for ever to love thee, and obey thee? but what diſcomfort are they like to be, if they ſerve the Devil

Devil and Sin? what ground of hope is there they ſhould be true to thee, that prove falſe to God; and if they periſh through thy neglect, the Blood of their Souls will be charged upon thee: and without Repentance, periſh they will. Oh! how neceſſary then is knowledge in parents; for where the Blind leads the Blind, both falls into the Ditch: and what thoughts will you have at your meeting in Hell? Set therefore upon this Duty betimes before it be too late; Train them up when they are young, in the way they ſhould walk; that when they are old they may not decline it: Delays are dangerous, Life is ſhort, the time of Death is uncertain; the Heart grows harder, and Sin grows ſtronger, the Devil gets better hold, and ſurer poſſeſſion; every Day makes them more unfit than other for Repentance. A Twig when young, is eaſily bent; but when old, it will break before it bend: follow them again, and again, with Exhortations to an Holy Life, deal ſeriouſly with them, take the fitteſt Seaſons for the Work; let them ſee the danger of Sin, and the Beauty of Holineſs: and Treat them with ſo much Compaſſion, that they may ſee thy love to their Souls; uſe alſo ſo much Zeal and Fervency, that they may ſee it is not Trifles thou preſſeſt them to take: the fitteſt Time and Place, never in Paſſion, ſeldome in Publick, ſhew them God's Word for it, turn them to the Chapter, and Verſe: this, if any thing, will ſilence them. If thou find

an

an Inclination in them, follow it home; encourage the good, and discourage the bad; let them find thou makest a difference between the one, and the other: this Course will bring Glory to God, Peace to thy self; and Benefit to thy Relations.

7. *Direct.* For a Conclusion of the whole, be sure in the performance of all those forementioned Duties, both Publick, and Private; to keep a clear Conscience void of Offence, towards God, and towards Man; and let the Ground of all thy performances be the Command of God, and thy strongest Motive be thy love to God, and thy dear Redeemer; and let no sinister End, or by Respect whatsoever prevail with thee: let God's Glory be thy End, and Aim, and the main Design thou drivest on; let thy endeavour be, to set the Crown upon God's Head, and not upon thine own: Consult not thy self till thou canst truly say in all thy Duties, *Propter te, Propter te Dimine,* this I have done for God, and not for my self: But if vain Glory, or a desire of Popular Applause, or Merit; or any such-like sinister Respects Fly-blow thy Duties, they will stink in God's Nostrils, and all thy Duties will be lost, and thy labour will be in vain: he that propounds a wrong End to himself, will lose all the pains he takes; as he that Shoots at a wrong Mark, will hardly hit the right: But if thy Duty proceed from a right Principle, a heart Purified by Faith; and if those Streams come from a Pure Fountain, a Puri-

Purified and Sincere Heart, and from a Principle of Love to God, and are directed to a right End, his Glory continues with thy own happineſs; then are they like to be a pleaſing Sacrifice unto God: for where the Fountain is clear, the Streams will be good; but till the Heart be right, their proceedings will be defiled. Though Man Judge the Heart by the Actions, God Judgeth the Actions by the Heart; he is *Hoker lebh, Scrutator cordes, the ſearcher of the Heart, and the tryer of the Reins, and gives every Man according to his ways, Jer.* 17. 9, 10. The Heart is the Fountan of all the Thoughts, Words, and Actions; now if the Fountain be filthy, ſo are the Streams: Sweet Water, and bitter, cannot proceed out of the ſame hole; if an Apple be rotten at the Coare, it will not be long before the outſide rot alſo: If the Heart be rotten, it ſooner, or later breaks forth, and rots the Life, and Converſation alſo; as it did in *Saul*, *Simon Magus*, and many others. An inbred Diſtemper, will appear outwardly; and a Soar not found at the bottom, will Feſter, and break out at length: Sincerity is like a skilful *Alchymiſt* it turns all into Gold; weak performances, defective Duties, ſhall be accepted: a Sigh, a Groan, a Deſire ſhall be underſtood, and anſwered: But Hypocriſie on the contrary, turns Gold into Droſs, and Duties into Sin, and the moſt Glorious performance into abomination; take heed therefore of this, and labour for the other: Faith alſo is requiſite in all

thy

thy Duties, leave not that behind thee in any Duty, if thou meaneſt to ſpeed; if Faith be abſent, God will not be preſent: without Faith 'is impoſſible to pleaſe him. No Prayer can pierce Heaven that is not pointed by Faith, *Heb.* 6. 11. *he that comes to God, muſt believe that God is; and that he is a rewarder of thoſe that dilligently ſeek him.* The Word Preached will not prove it, if it be not mixed with Faith in thoſe that hear it; nay, without Faith there can be no Salvation, *Mark* 16. 16. *he that believeth, and is Baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not ſhall be damned, Joh.* 3. *laſt.* Self-denyal alſo is requiſite; when thou haſt done all, ſay thou art an unprofitable Servant. God gives Grace to the Humble, but looks upon the Proud afar off; yea the Apoſtle ſaith, he reſiſteth the Proud, or ſets himſelf in Battel aray againſt him; bring not a proud heart along with thee, if thou wouldeſt ſpeak with God in a Duty: ſubmit to his Will, though thou ſee not a reaſon for his Command, there is yet reaſon enough why thou ſhouldeſt obey, as *Abraham* did: content thy ſelf to be at Gods diſpoſe, do thy Duty, and he will do his Work; but Limit him not to Time, Place, Manner, Meaſure, or other Circumſtances: depend upon him as *Hannah* did, when ſhe had prayed, ſhe looked no more ſad. Take heed when thou haſt done thy Work, of Heart-riſing Thoughts, or proud vain Glory; leſt it make thee loſe thy Reward: this will ſpoil thy Duty, and make thee loſe thy Reward:

deny

deny thy Self, and he will not deny thy Reward: the lower thou thinkeſt of thy Duties, the better God thinks of them; and will Crown them with Succeſs. And having begun well, be ſure to hold out, be thou conſtant to the Death, and he will give thee a Crown of Life: what thou wanteſt, and beggeſt of God, endeavour with Heart and Hand to obtain it: true Deſires are always accompanied with endeavours, 'tis not enough to wiſh for Heaven, but work for it: Corruption will not be abated, nor Grace increaſed, without painstaking: love Holineſs, and hate Sin, or thou wilt never hold out, or do good: *if thou regard Iniquity in thy Heart, God will not hear thy Prayer, Pſal.* 66. 18. *Joh.* 9. 31. God requires Holineſs, in all that draw near to him; and *without it, no Man ſhall ſee him with Comfort, Heb.* 12. 14. If thou take this courſe in thy Publick and Private Duties, Peace ſhall be to thee, and to the *Iſrael* of God. Now to him that is able to keep you from falling, and to preſent you faultleſs before the preſence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy, to the only wiſe God our Saviour, be Glory, and Majeſty, Dominion, and Power, both now and ever *Amen.*

FINIS.

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Doth ſhew the Work was done by Men;
If you would Read the Authors mind,
Mend the miſtakings here you find.

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